



African Violet MAGAZINE

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■ African Violet Magazine

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- **Master Varieties List (AMVL) & Supplements:** Download from AVSA website or order from AVSA office for \$2. Orders in writing only. Send any correction and/or description of new cultivars with hybridizer's name to: Joe Bruns, Plant Registration (see above).
- **Research:** Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304. *Email:* jsmith4@bsu.edu.
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- **Future Dates:** Virtual Convention, May 30–June 6, 2021; Little Rock, AR in 2022; Atlanta in 2023. If interested in sponsoring a national convention in your area, contact Convention Chair.
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African Violet Society of America

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308

Email: president@avsa.org

To our AVSA Friends:

As you are reading this *AVM*, the holidays are behind us, winter is here and we are beginning to think about whether it will be possible to have our spring shows. We hope this New Year brings an end to the COVID-19 pandemic, brings health and happiness to you and yours, and that your African violets and other gesneriads perform well for you.

Atlanta Convention Update

Due to the continuing concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic and our members' concern for the safety of travel, your AVSA Executive Committee and Kathy Lahti, Convention Director, have made the difficult decision to reschedule our 2021 Atlanta Convention for May 28 to June 4, 2023 (following our 2022 convention in Little Rock, Arkansas). We at AVSA consider our members' health, safety and well-being of utmost importance and concern. Please be assured this decision was not made in haste. Find further information about our decision on page 18.

Plans are underway to host another Virtual Convention. Please watch *AVM*, the AVSA website, *AVSA News* and our social media pages for details as they become available. If you would like to volunteer to be involved with the 2021 Virtual Convention, learn more about volunteering on page 19.

Office Update

Many thanks to Amy Carruth, Winston Goretsky and Stephanie Travis for all the hard work and many hours they devoted to implementing the iMIS Membership Database. The system "go live" date is here and it will prove to be a great help to accomplish the everyday work of the office and maintain member records. See more information on iMIS on page 5.

Plans are underway to
host another Virtual
Convention.

Website Update

The Website Committee, Joyce Stork, Tom Glembocki, Candace Baldwin, Richard Craft and many others have been working to update the AVSA website. Many thanks to all who have worked to accomplish this new look and function for the website — job well done! It has a new look and feel. Find updated navigation information on page 16.

Fall Executive Committee Meeting

Your Executive Committee has been meeting weekly via Microsoft Teams to accomplish our annual Fall Meeting. It is not the same as meeting in person but due to COVID-19 restrictions we are "making it work" virtually.

We currently have a volunteer opportunity: the Library Committee is in need of a chairperson. Please contact Second Vice President Mary Corondan or me if you would like to volunteer for this position.

Nominating Committee

You can read the report of the Nominating Committee chaired by Linda Hall on page 12. Congratulations are extended to this slate of officers and directors. Thank you, Linda and your committee for accomplishing this assignment.

Through our continuing two-way communication, African Violets Continue to Connect Us!



Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

Email: editor@avsa.org

Happy New Year to all AVSA members. I hope 2021 sees a return to "normal" and the opportunity to gather once again before the year is out.

Even though local and national in-person shows have been cancelled, there is still plenty African violet growers can do to keep busy. With limited ability to travel or shop, we have more time at home to keep an eye on our plants and maybe try a few new activities related to the hobby. We hope some of the articles in this issue can help.

For example, one of our articles is from Terri Vicenzi, who gives tips on dividing streps (page 28). Suzanne Myers has embraced the quarantine theme to remind growers why they should quarantine new plants and included some tips on how she protects her collection (see page 20).

Contest Entries

The articles from Terri and Suzanne, as well as seven other helpful articles, are contest entries. I am thrilled that we had more contest entries than ever in this issue. All AVSA members can learn from the experiences of fellow members, so I really appreciate how writers came through to share their tips and challenges in this issue. Remember, you can submit a contest entry by March 1 (the deadline for the May/June issue), so try writing an article to pass your "stuck-at-home" time. Learn more about the contest at www.avsa.org/magazine and contact me if you have any questions.

Virtual Convention

You also can fill your time growing plants for show. I know your local shows, along with our Atlanta show, have been cancelled. But you still have a fun chance to show off your prized plants — the AVSA Virtual Convention (see page 18). Last year's online version of our national show and convention was

loads of fun. Take photos of your plants and designs and enter them in categories through the website (we'll have more information on how to enter in later issues). And stay tuned for helpful presentations from experienced growers and exhibitors as part of the week-long event.

There is still plenty
African violet growers
can do to keep busy.

75th Anniversary

For the 75th Anniversary of AVSA, Dr. Jeff Smith looks back at breakthroughs in hybridizing over the past 25 years (page 6). He also compiled an interesting list of "firsts" in African violet hybrids (page 8). If you want to find some of these vintage varieties, see our reminder about the work of AVSA's Violet Preservation Committee on page 11.

Perhaps no challenge exemplifies the determination, perseverance and dedication of AVSA members for the past 75 years better than how we all are handling the challenge of this pandemic. Although we cannot celebrate the 75th Anniversary in person, we can get together through the virtual convention and virtual affiliate meetings until it is safe to gather again.

Most of all, we can keep growing, grooming, learning and even sharing our plants. Hang in there.

Ring in the New Year with a Technology Refresh

By Winston J. Goretsky, AVSA Past President

By the time you get to read this, you may have already noticed a change in the AVSA website. If you're not already a frequent visitor to www.avsa.org, I would encourage you to explore our new technology soon at www.africanvioletsofamerica.org. For those of you who may not be aware, a lot of activity takes place "behind the scenes" at AVSA. One of these many activities, for example, is the member services provided to you by our Office Manager, Amy Carruth.

Membership Software

Membership applications and renewals are received through the mail, over the telephone, and as transactions through the web store. The technology solution we have been using is an Association Management Software product called **iMIS**. We have been a longstanding customer of this product, which has served us very well for more than 20 years. This past year, the computer systems were damaged by hurricane flood waters, which destroyed our installation and forced us to recover the data manually. Amy has been running the "back office" activities using spreadsheets, saved lists, and reports. Thanks to the many hours of painstaking recovery efforts, the decision was made to upgrade our iMIS product to the latest version. By taking advantage of a cloud-based architecture, we would be freed from the continual purchase of new hardware and the constant concern of managing a physical infrastructure. Online access to our systems and the ability to work remotely provides a greater range of operating flexibility. Our data is now securely managed for us and our backups and security are integrated with our hosting solution.

New Features

With new technology comes new features. You, as a member, will now be able to log on to your Member-

ship Account and manage your contact details and review your current and historical purchase history. The site also will let you print your invoices and donation receipts. You can track your convention registrations, make modifications as required, and update your preferences as needed. We will introduce many new features in the future, and it will be exciting to see how we will be able to use this new tool to provide and extend new services to our members.

In conjunction with the new member management solution, the Shopping Cart is integrated to allow for electronic invoicing and NEW payment features. Automatic Membership Renewal payments will now be available. This automatic feature will be available for regular planned donations as well. You'll be able to plan your giving to the various donation categories on an automatic basis. You can make changes to these plans, update your payment method, and alter or suspend the payments on your own. Of course, we're always happy to help you over the telephone, in case you'd rather speak directly to us. We love to hear your voice from time to time.

As this solution is rolling out, the Website Committee has also changed the technology platform on which our website (www.avsa.org) is based. With a new year comes a lot of new changes. We've all become aware of change over the past year, and a change for the better is something to embrace.

Amy and I truly hope that you'll be as excited with these new changes as we are and please be patient as we work through any difficulties that might emerge as we embark on this new path.

We're always encouraged to hear comments from our members and since this is YOUR society, please feel free to offer any helpful suggestions that could make it better for everyone.



75th Anniversary: A Look at Hybridizers

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the African Violet Society of America, I've been asked to devote this column to describing major changes I've witnessed in hybridizing during the past 25 years. I suppose one way to approach this task would be to reread my columns that have appeared in the *African Violet Magazine*. Instead, I have combed through several sources and will group some of the genetic traits and events together into clusters. I hope you will agree after reading this column that it has been a most interesting and exciting 25 years!

Breakthrough Traits

Although slightly farther back than 25 years, African violet hybridizers finally accomplished one of the most long-sought dreams — yellow flowers. His Promise and Majesty were released in 1992 and many hybridizers have experimented and worked to further develop yellow-flowered African violets. While consistently pure yellow flowers are still a goal, yellow flower color has been bred onto many plant sizes and plant types. Hybridizers still are working on the yellows, and hopefully it won't take another 25 years to get the ideal yellow flower.

At least three major breakthroughs in variegated foliage have occurred in the past 25 years. Chimera leaf variegation is exemplified by Rob's Lucky Penny, which was registered in 1997. Chimera variegation has pale edges on medium green leaves and is highly desirable because of its stability under different growing temperatures. Chimera variegation does not come true from leaf cuttings, similar to chimera flowers. Harmony's Little Stinker has a different foliage color pattern but is also an example of chimera leaf variegation. Not many chimera variegated hybrids have been produced so far, but each year brings additional cultivars from which to choose.

Optimara has produced a leaf variegation type as exemplified in Optimara Loyalty and Optimara Charity. This leaf variegation consists of random patches of light and dark green. The variegation pattern is similar to spontaneous variegation, but can be reproduced consistently and is stable under most growing conditions. A similar variegation pattern has been reported in at least two species plants. I would expect this variegation to become available in more cultivars in the future.



Saintpaulia Botanika has a unique HOX mutation.
Photo by Winston J. Goretsky.

The third new leaf variegation is cosmic variegation, as found in Cosmic Fairy and which was just announced within the past year (*AVM*, July/August 2020, pages 14-18). This variegation is most unusual with light yellow spots of different sizes in the leaves. Hybridizers are just starting to have access to this new variegation and it will be interesting to see what

the next few years bring from those using this newest variegated foliage trait.

Flower Part Mutations

Several flower part mutations have been found and documented in the past 25 years. As a group, these mutations are changes in the *HOX* genes that control the development of the flower parts. A well-known *HOX* mutation is double-petaled flowers where the stamens have been changed into petals. *Saintpaulia Botanica* (or *Botanika*) has a *HOX* mutation that produces petals with anthers on the edges. This plant has been an interesting curiosity for some collectors. Optimara NeverFloris has a *HOX* mutation in which all flower parts are changed into sepals. The little green cabbage-looking flowers are extremely long lasting and plants can be covered with up to 100 flowers.

Wesley's Little Monster is another extreme *HOX* gene mutation in which the flower parts are all changed into pistils. The flowers look like pincushions with pistils pointing in all directions. Perhaps one of the most important *HOX* mutations is the Optimara Looxo series, which lack stamens and anthers. Thrips ignore the male sterile flowers because there is no pollen on which they can feed. Growers who face challenges keeping thrips out of their collections might finally have a way to enjoy flowers and avoid a pest problem.



Unique foliage of Senk's Anemone, exhibited by Sam Cunningham and hybridized by D. Senk/R. Follett.
Photo by Winston J. Goretsky.

David Senk

It would be difficult to discuss the changes in the past 25 years without giving a nod to one specific hybridizer and a second large group of hybridizers. David Senk (see article in *AVM* September/October 2020, pages 18-20) has pushed the boundaries of what we thought African violets could be. Working with such diverse traits as double girl foliage, bustled foliage, longifolia foliage, wasp flowers, trailers, yellow flowers and other traits, David has created some of the most striking and unusual hybrids seen in recent years. Not everyone finds the plants attractive, but no one can argue about the uniqueness of plants such as Senk's Anemone, Senk's Bad Girl, and the majestic longifolia trailer Senk's Snowy Egret. David has shown the many possibilities of African violets and has inspired hybridizers to continue to search for new and unusual combinations of traits.



RM-Rozovye Kudri, exhibited by Alla Kotova and hybridized by D. Ozherelyev and N. Shorniakova.
Photo by Natalia Shushakova.

Russian Hybridizers

The group of plants often referred to as "Russian African violets" have come from the creative efforts of many Russian and Ukrainian hybridizers (see article in the *AVM* November/December 2018, page 28). These hybridizers have selected for large flowers with intense colors, unusual markings, and other showy traits with the goal of producing a plant with a fantastic floral display to brighten a room. The results of their efforts have been striking and have

generated a renewal of interest in African violets the world over.

The “Russian” plants truly are gorgeous eye candy for growers and many individuals are adding them to their collections. The challenge is not in growing these plants, but in keeping the names intact. Translations of cultivar names from Russian to English have often been faulty and keeping labels accurate has been challenging.

Additional Traits

There are some additional traits that I’d like to mention. These don’t fall nicely into a group but are traits or combinations of traits that have been developed and recognized in the past few years. These include: puff fantasy marks on foliage, flowers that combine dot and puff fantasy such as seen in Rivermist Zombie, bell-shaped flowers, large flowers with wide white edges such as in Optimara myLove,

bell-shaped flowers with wasp petals, new plants with clackamus foliage, highly ruffled petal edges, and trailers with bustled foliage and longifolia foliage.

These new traits are providing hybridizers with a rich source of variety to mix and match, producing cultivars unlike those from 25 years ago. The number of possibilities that can be produced in cultivars today is truly staggering.

In summary, it has been an exciting 25 years in hybridizing and development of new cultivars. The discovery of new genetic traits combined with the visionary work of hybridizers is producing an explosion of new and exciting African violet cultivars. I can only hope that the future provides many new and exciting pathways as we progress “In Search of New Violets” and celebrate the 75th anniversary of the African Violet Society of America.

Hybridizers Behind the 2020 Best Varieties

The 2020 Best Varieties List, just published in the November/December 2020 *African Violet Magazine*, features hybrids from the 16 fine hybridizers listed below. The numbers following their names represent the total number of hybrids currently listed in First Class from each.

- Linda Abplanalp (1)
- Ruth Bann (98)
- Irene Fredette (259)
- Pat Hancock (239)
- Kazuo Horikoshi/Hiroshi Sawara (1)

- Robert Kurzynski (25)
- Elena Lebetaikaia (159)
- Lyndon Lyon (et al) (872)
- Ken Muzalewski (30)
- Don Ness (209)
- Hortense Pittman (734)
- Ralph Robinson (250)
- Dave Rollins (25)
- Geoffrey T. Smith (9)
- Kent Stork (176)
- Michel Tremblay (33)



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

***Columnea* 'Orange Sherbet'**

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Libby Behnke

Best in Show, Other Gesneriad, 2010



AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: affiliate@avsa.org

January 2021 marks the beginning of a year that we all hope will be better than last year. The COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult for clubs to hold meetings. Many clubs turned to virtual meeting applications such as Zoom, Skype, Meet Now, Cisco Webex Meetings, Google Meet, etc. Through these virtual meetings, clubs are able to continue seeing their members, which is so nice when you can't meet in person. Some clubs that opened their meetings up to people outside of their club managed to gain some new members, so this is a new idea for increasing membership.

Virtual Meetings

Several clubs that are having virtual meetings only at this time are updating their club information to let people know who to contact if they want to attend the virtual meetings. After things return to normal, they will send in another update to enter their meeting location and times. It's always a good idea to keep your club information up to date on the AVSA website.

For those of you who are thinking of having a virtual meeting, I'd like to suggest that you get in touch with some clubs who are already having virtual meetings. There is a bit more work required to put together a presentation that members can easily view online. There is also a bit of training for club members to use your virtual meeting application (such as how to mute your computer so you don't talk or make noise while someone is speaking). With virtual meetings, it's possible to arrange for outside speakers who will not have to travel to your club location, another plus.

Sign Up for Email

Have you noticed the "Sign up for AVSA Email" button on the AVSA.org home page? You can sign up to receive weekly growing tips and monthly AVSA News. I encourage you to sign up. Also, several of our

African violet hybridizers have lots of growing information on their sites: Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses (www.lyndonlyon.com), click on Helpful Hints; Optimara African Violets, (www.optimara.com), click on Visitmyviolet.com; Violet Barn (www.violetbarn.com) click on How to Grow and then click on Plant care pages. And, of course, learn from the AVSA website (www.avsa.org), click on Violets 101.

The Website Committee is working on making some updates to the website. I put in a request to have an area where club meeting ideas could be posted. I think it's a common problem to come up with meeting ideas that keep members' interest. You don't want members falling asleep through yet another demonstration of putting down a leaf.

If your club has an interesting or fun meeting idea to share, you can start sending them to me now. It would be nice to have a few ready whenever there is a place to post on our website.

We have a list of members working to start a club:

- Vikki Bierley: Evansville, IN;
Email: vicki0323@aol.com
- Mary Ann Markey: Port Charlotte, FL;
Email: drmaograde@gmail.com
- Laura Carpenter: Lancaster, CA;
Phone: 661-940-3990
- Cherie Przymus: Cheyenne, WY;
Email: clprzy@gmail.com

Hopefully, someone will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact the Affiliate Chair for help.

There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.

Get Help Finding and Sharing Vintage Violets

Looking for a vintage African violet? Or maybe you have leaves from a vintage plant to share? You can connect with AVSA members who can help you find the African violet you want or who can take some leaves or plants off your hands.



Rhapsodie Patricia, exhibited by Linda Sumski. The variety was hybridized by Holtkamp in 1995, adding it to the list of vintage varieties in 2020. Photo by Richard Craft.

The AVSA Violet Preservation Committee wants to help preserve vintage varieties and help members locate favorite plants. All you have to do is send the committee an email. Be sure to include plant and contact information.

Seeking a vintage violet: Send an email message to: preservingviolets@avsa.org. Include the name of the plant and your contact information (name, preferred email address for a response).

Sharing vintage violets: Send an email message to: preservingviolets@avsa.org. List available varieties and include your contact information (name, preferred email address for a response).

Read more about the Violet Preservation Committee on page 31 of the January/February 2020 issue of *AVM*. Help us preserve and share those lovely varieties growers have enjoyed for 25-plus years.

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from September 1, 2020, through October 31, 2020 Total: \$200

■ Geneva — \$100-\$499

The Tidewater AVS, Virginia Beach, VA

*In memory of Virginia Garrison, Elliott Garrison,
Timothy Topping and Gene Hill*

Geneva (Continued)

Marie A. Glass, Paradise, PA

Board of Directors Nominations for 2021

Each year, the AVSA Nominating Committee develops a slate of candidates for upcoming board positions. This year, we have nominees for the officer positions and five nominees for director positions. Members will vote the week of the AVSA National Convention. Get to know our nominees below and be sure to vote this spring.



Susan E. Anderson
Phoenix, Arizona
President

I am honored to be nominated as President of AVSA. My passion for African violets began when I was 12 years old. A pale lavender blooming plant caught my eye at the mall, where a local club was holding their show and sale. Needless to say, I took it home and my collection has grown since then. The variegated standards are my favorites! When it comes to shows, I truly enjoy creating designs — especially the mobiles and hanging arrangements, due to their added mechanical challenges.

I have been a member of AVSA and a local affiliate since 1997. I am currently a member of the Copper State African Violet Club, a club that is dedicated to teaching others about the joys of growing African violets and sharing the tricks to succeeding in doing so in a desert environment.

After attending a few national conventions, I became more involved with AVSA as a dedicated volunteer. As an AVSA Director, I enjoyed learning about the various committees that support the organization and encourage others to get involved, too. I have served on many AVSA committees, including Membership and Promotion, Publications, Nominating, and Shows and Judges. I am currently serving as the

Show Schedule Approver and compile the annual Tally Time report. I am proud to be a Life Member and a Senior Judge.

I reside in Phoenix, Arizona, and work as an assistant state engineer for the Arizona Department of Transportation. In my free time, I enjoy photography, playing piano and traveling. Serving AVSA has afforded me the opportunity to travel and make friends throughout the world. I look forward to continuing to promote and modernize AVSA for future sustainability.



Mary Corondan
Fairview, Texas
First Vice President

I became interested in African violets because of the influence and encouragement of my mother and grandmother. I have grown violets since 1978 when I became a member of AVSA.

Currently, I am a member of the First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas where I have served in many offices, including president, and currently am treasurer. I also and treasurer of the North Texas African Violet Judges' Council. As an active member of Lone Star African Violet Council, I have served as president, secretary, convention chair and awards chair.

In addition to serving the past two years as 2nd Vice President of AVSA, I have been Secretary, a member of the Building Committee, the Awards Committee, and have served as a Director twice. I now am the Chair of the Shows and Judges Committee and a Master Judge. I have been the "And the Winners Are..." columnist in the *African Violet Magazine* for the past 25 years.

Having taught in public schools for 23 years, I currently am retired. I have a masters of music education degree from Arkansas State University and reside in Fairview with my husband, Bill. We have one daughter and three grandsons.



Glenda Williams
McDade, Texas
Second Vice President

It is an honor to accept this nomination to serve as AVSA 2nd Vice President and I appreciate your vote of confidence. I continue my belief in the special

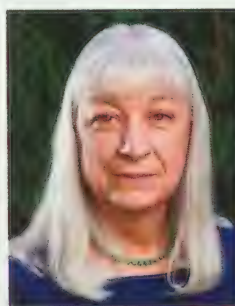
chemistry and talents of our AVSA membership and all that we give back to our communities are key to keeping the AVSA strong and successful. I believe public outreach and education is especially important and I support AVSA programs that provide these services. I am excited to continue this journey meeting and working with our extended African violet family to further explore and share, wherever possible, AVSA's rich history and culture.

I am a native Texan and African violet enthusiast living with my husband, Jim, on a small farm in McDade, a quaint rural community near Austin, Texas. My earliest memories are growing up playing in the family garden. My love of African violets began in the 1970s after receiving an African violet from a sweet German grandmother, Nana Fuelberg. Temporary sabbaticals from the 1980s to 2005 for motherhood, aging parents, grandparenting, higher education and my professional career sidelined my hobby for a few years. A surprise Mother's Day gift from my daughter of a beautiful box store African violet rekindled this love. As they say, the rest is history!

I have served AVSA as: 3rd Vice President (2019-2021); Director (2015-2017); Chair - Ways and Means Committee (2014-2018); Show Chair - 2019 AVSA National Convention, Houston; Convention Co-Chair - 2013 AVSA National Convention, Austin; Senior Judge; and Commercial Member.

My other volunteer services in the horticulture community include: Lone Star AV Council (LSAVC) - president 2017-current; Central Texas Judge's

Council (CTJC); memberships in the local AVSA affiliates: First Austin AV Society (FAAVS) and Houston AV Violet and Gesneriad Society (HAVGS); and the Texas/Bastrop County Master Gardeners Association (special TMG/Texas AgriLife certifications in plant health/diagnostics education and greenhouse management). I have a bachelor's degree and retired after 35-plus years in the information technology industry, specializing in strategic planning and legislative/fiscal analysis in state government.



Sharon Shannon
Los Lunas, New Mexico
Third Vice President

My main passion is my African violets and anything that has to do with them. "Anything" includes not just growing and propagating violets, but also

working for my club, meeting new members and encouraging them to expand their skills, seeing members succeed, and of course, AVSA.

I was introduced to African violets in the early 1990s by a now-dear friend I had met at work. She had a one-shelf light stand full of beautiful flowers and I fell in love! She gave me my first plant and my first lights and taught me all the basics of care, techniques that I still use today. Then I went to a show, and then I went to a club meeting and the rest is history! I still blame my friend, Sharla, for all the "trouble" I've gotten into as well as crediting her with all the pleasure I've had from that first African violet. It's funny how one plant can change one's life!

As a member of the Albuquerque African Violet Club, I have served as secretary, vice president, and president spanning the past 14 years. I am also a member of the Rocky Mountain African Violet Council.

I have been a member of AVSA since 2007. I have served as Convention Chair for the Albuquerque convention in 2016 (a highlight in my African violet career), Classification Chair in 2019 for the AVSA convention, and as Director from 2019 to present.

I have a B.S. in Computer Science and work as a software engineer. I have two children and six grandchildren, and I'm very fortunate to have them all living

near me. Other hobbies and interests include photography and knitting. I am honored to be nominated as Third Vice President for AVSA and look forward to serving.



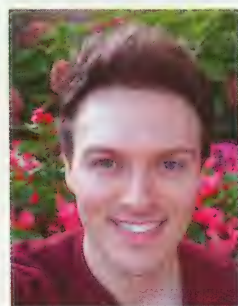
Terri Post
Sioux City, Iowa
Treasurer

I am a CPA and have been in the accounting industry for 32 years. I currently am a partner in a CPA firm located in the cities of Elk Point, Alcester, and Vermillion, South Dakota. This firm specializes in governmental and nonprofit auditing, along with tax return preparation. During my entire career, I have enjoyed working with many nonprofit organizations.

I currently serve as the AVSA Finance Chair, where I have prepared AVSA financial statements, annual budgets and AVSA tax returns for the years 2009 to 2020. I also have served as show co-chairman once for AVSA and twice for the Missouri Valley African Violet Council, where I have served, in past years, as treasurer for MVAVC. I also am a member of Lone Star African Violet Council.

I live on acreage in Sioux City, Iowa, with my husband, three dogs, two mini-horses, and lots and lots of African violets.

It is an honor to be nominated to serve again as Treasurer for AVSA.



Scott Ammann
Highland, Illinois
Director

How could I have gone so long without knowing about these amazing plants? I'm so thankful I walked into the St. Louis Botanical Garden the day our local club had an information table set up at the entrance. A houseplant that blooms throughout the year? ... that can be grown under lights? ... that has variegation? ... that's super easy to propagate and share with all my friends? I'm in.

And now, just a few years later, I am show chair for the Metropolitan St. Louis African Violet Council,

serve as vice president for the Gateway West Gesneriad Society and help as newsletter editor for the Missouri Valley African Violet Council.

Honestly, I'm not sure why I never considered studying horticulture. I seem to spend every moment of my free time either gardening or reading about plants. Instead, I studied economics and French and went to live in France for 4 years after graduation. I completed my master's degree there, also in economics, and then lived in England for a year before moving to Beijing, China, for 4 years. I blame and thank the Beijing Flower Market for their very affordable plants and for inciting a dangerous habit of plant collecting.

Back home in a small town in Illinois for 6 years now, I've slowly created a garden both inside and around my home that fills me with joy.

I believe we should surround ourselves with beauty and kindness, two things that I find plant societies like ours have in abundance. It's so important to keep our clubs as thriving as our plants so we can share the joy with others.



Kurt Jablonski
Miami, Florida
Director

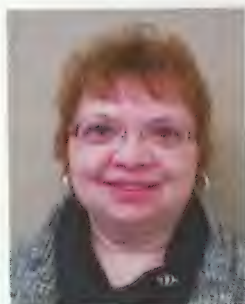
I have been a member of AVSA since 2002. My interest in violets started before that when I visited my grandparents' home as a child. My grandmother always had houseplants, including violets. She rooted leaves in small glass jars on the windowsills and they caught my interest. My grandfather was more of an outside gardener, but he enjoyed all plants. We went several times to the Philadelphia Flower Show where I was first introduced to the wide variety of African violets.

One year, a seminar was being given by a member of the African Violet Society of Philadelphia, Betsy Branson, and that is where I learned the basics of care. She noticed me in the audience as a young man (which made me an atypical grower) and invited my grandfather and me to her home to see her collection. I was blown away by the show plants

lining her shelves. I had never seen plants so large. It was at that moment that I knew I wanted to grow large show plants.

I joined the club and made many great friends and a new "grandmother," Judi Criswell, who took me under her wing as an adopted grandson. She called me her "boytoy." She was there for me in all aspects of my life; a true shoulder to lean on. Betsy took me to my first convention in 2005. The bonds of friendship found in this hobby are what keep me coming back to convention year after year; it is the best part of our world.

I have been fortunate to have been mentored over the years by several people, but I don't have the space to name them all. I must thank Bessie Pyle of the Delaware AVS and Pat Hancock, hybridizer of the Buckeyes, who taught me the fundamentals of show growing. As an AVSA Director, I hope to encourage others to grow beautiful plants and help as much as I can. I also hope to move AVSA toward its brightest possible future.



Patricia Mattson
Luck, Wisconsin
Director

I lived in Minnesota all my life until I jumped over the border to Wisconsin to marry a dairy farmer 47 years ago. We have two daughters and six awesome grandchildren. I was a total city girl, but I always loved horses with a passion. My husband jokes that I married him because he had pasture for one. Got that right, sort of. When I married, I told him two things to take into account. One was that I didn't want plants because I killed all of them. Second, no poodles because I lived next door to the little poodle from hell.

Oddly enough, I ended up training and showing my own poodles in obedience and agility and we were in a dog obedience parade drill team that won many ribbons and trophies. I've been a schoolteacher and an award-winning commission animal portrait artist. For nearly 30 years, I have been a professional pet stylist and I own a grooming shop.

Shortly after I moved to Wisconsin, I met a special neighbor, Deb, who became a lifelong friend and who introduced me to African violets and enticed me to attend a show in Minnesota. The way she described the violets, I was so excited that I couldn't sleep the night before the show. I was not disappointed, and she and I still share our love for violets and attend violet club meetings and shows together where we always purchase more to feed our voracious addiction.

I became more involved in the Minnesota clubs and shows by entering plants and designs. My two clubs are an hour or two away, but it's so worth the drive. I've held positions as president, vice president, membership and treasurer in the African Violet Society of Minnesota and Lakes African Violet Growers. I have an AVSA judge's certificate. I've had great fun attending shows and judging in Minnesota and Wisconsin and at conventions. Locally I have taught school community education classes, to master gardener clubs and at other venues to promote and educate the public about African violets.

I learned how not to kill plants and raise beautiful African violets instead. I'm glad my life didn't stay the way it started, or like Garth Brooks sang, "I'd have missed the dance."



Leonard Re
Fountain Valley, California
Director

Growing African violets has been a hobby of mine for more than 55 years. A relative I lived with in Pittston, Pennsylvania, introduced me to them and I have loved them ever since. I became much more involved with the hobby after I attended my first African violet show in 1981. I immediately joined the Orange County AVS in Southern California, along with AVSA the following year. Currently, I am an AVSA life member. I have been 2nd vice president, 1st vice president, treasurer, secretary and president of the club (unfortunately now disbanded). I also am a Master African Violet Judge and Teacher. I am pre-sident of the Tustana AVS club in Orange

County and past treasurer and past president of the South Coast African Violet and Gesneriad Club in Los Angeles. In addition, I am a member of Tri-Counties AVS. I am a Senior Judge in the Gesneriad Society. I also am president of our Judges' Council and the Southern California African Violet Council, as well as past show chair for our state convention in 2005.

On my light stands, I grow all types of African violets — minis, semi-minis, standards, trailers and species, my favorite being variegated standards. In addition, I grow streps, episcias, sinninigas, kohlerias, a few primulinas and petrocosmeas.

I am active in promoting African violets and their cousins throughout Southern California by speaking at violet clubs, county fairs, bridge clubs and garden clubs.



Danny Tidwell
McRae, Arkansas
Director

I call the very small town of McRae my home. McRae is in central Arkansas and has a population of just under 700. My graduating class of 1981 was one of the largest at McRae Public Schools; we had a grand total of 35 seniors that year. My summers consisted mostly of working on my uncle's farm, putting many miles on a tractor and working in the Holt Strawberry Fields, known statewide as the best berries around. I also enjoyed hunting, fishing and swimming in the pond on the farm. I like gardening outdoors with a large vegetable garden that we can enjoy through the cold winter months. I believe this

is where my love of growing things started. I remember seeing violets on my mother's and aunt's kitchen windows and thought they were pretty cool.

Move ahead a few years later. A friend who worked in a local grocery store flower shop where I managed the bakery said, "come go with me to a violet show to see what it is like." When we walked through the door of the show, that was it, I was hooked right then and there. The violets were unbelievable to me. I believe Best in Show was Apache Gem, and it was so stunning, I can still see it today. Vintage Wine, Lela Marie and Ward Brown were the three violets that I purchased that day. I then joined the Central Arkansas AVS and have been a member for about 25 years.

I have been a member of AVSA for 23 years. I grow way too many African violets and other gesneriads and also enjoy doing design and container gardens. My other hobbies are decorating cakes, cooking, fishing, hunting, raising tropical fish, and my favorite activity is spending time with my grandson Tristan.

I have been involved in the natural gas business for more than 20 years and currently am employed with Center Point Energy as an AM-R/ERT technician. I currently serve as Convention Chair for the 2022 Annual Convention in Arkansas and as staging and focal point chair for the upcoming convention in Atlanta, and chaired this committee for the 2017 Annual Convention in Albuquerque.

75th Anniversary: AVSA Board Members



Winston Goretsky and Jack Wilson, 2002 convention.
Photo courtesy of Winston Goretsky.



Five past presidents at 2004 convention. Back, L to R:
Jack Wilson, Bill Foster. Front, L to R: Janet Riemer, Mary
Boland, Charlie Bollard. Photo by Winston Goretsky.



AVSA Executive Committee, 2003. L to R: Gary Gordon,
Treasurer; Nancy Hayes, Secretary; Ron Davidson,
3rd VP; Joyce Stork, 2nd VP, Linda Owens, 1st VP, and
Janet Riemer, President.



1991 Office Dedication in Beaumont, Texas. L to R: Jane
Birge, Charlie Bollard, Beaumont Mayor Evelyn Lord, and
Nancy Lawrence. Photo by Janet Riemer.

AVSA Annual Convention Announcement

Dear Members,

The AVSA Executive Committee met in an electronic meeting to discuss the 2021 Convention and Show in Atlanta, Georgia. A survey was conducted and the results indicated that members are still concerned about the safety of travel.

Considering the evolving global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the many restrictions that are being imposed by federal, state and local authorities, your Executive Committee voted to **CANCEL our in-person May 30 to June 6, 2021, Convention at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel**. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided guidance with respect to gatherings in the United States. Although our convention is 4 months out, we felt that in the best interest and safety of our membership we should cancel/reschedule this year's convention.

The Sheraton Atlanta has been generous with us to confirm a date to reschedule our convention and show for May 28 to June 4, 2023.

We hope you understand our rationale for making this decision. The health and welfare of our members is of the utmost importance to us and we are committed to your safety.

In summary, these are the things for you to do:

- Mark your calendar for the 2023 Convention in Atlanta May 28–June 4, 2023
- Be sure to also save the date of our 2022 convention in Little Rock, Arkansas (May 29–June 4, 2022).
- And get ready for our 2021 75th Anniversary Convention, which will be online (see page 19).
- Look for updated information in the *AVM*, on the website and on social media.

The health and welfare
of our members is of
the utmost importance.

• Please direct questions to Sue Ramser, your other Executive Committee members, Convention Director Kathy Lahti, or Office Manager Amy Carruth.

We at AVSA want you to be safe, stay healthy, practice social distancing and follow the direction of your local governing agencies. Remain connected to your family and friends in a manner that meets your needs and theirs. We must continue to remember that African Violets **continue to connect us** even through this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Sue Ramser, President

Susan Anderson, First Vice President

Mary Corondan, Second Vice President

Glenda Williams, Third Vice President

Terri Post, Treasurer

Winston Goretsky, Past President

2021 Convention Opportunities — Get Involved!

The decision has been made to transition the 75th Anniversary Convention from an in-person event to an online, virtual event (Cyber Diamond Celebration). However, a virtual convention has many of the same challenges as an in-person event, and we need volunteers to make it a success. Thus, AVSA is seeking assistance with the development and hosting of the 2021 convention. One advantage of going virtual is that any member of AVSA can get involved!

AVSA is a volunteer-run organization. Please consider donating your time and skills to make the 2021 Convention a success by helping in one of these areas:

- **Show Room** — We will request photo submittals of plants and designs as show entries. A few people are needed to review, crop and upload the files into the virtual showroom.
- **New Introductions** — AVSA will solicit photos of new hybrids from our many hybridizers. These photos and descriptions will require review and placement in the new introduction gallery.
- **Sales Room** — A team will work with the commercial growers to set up a virtual sales room.
- **Social** — One of the best parts of convention is meeting and visiting with other attendees. A few social butterflies will get the party started and jump-start an online social hour.
- **Programs and Presentations** — Conventions bring value to members through engaging educational seminars. Speakers, topics and videography skills are needed.

One advantage of going virtual is that any member of AVSA can get involved!

• **Fundraising** — As AVSA's primary source of generating operating revenue for the year, going virtual means creating new, innovative online auctions and raffles.

• **Website and Technical** — A virtual convention will be built on the internet, which will require several dedicated, behind-the-scenes masters to construct a website for hosting the event.

If you are willing to help, please send an email to: AVSA2021Convention@gmail.com with your name, email address, phone number, and the area(s) of need in which you would like to participate. A virtual kick-off meeting will be held in February with the convention team and various committees.

Quarantine!

By Suzanne Myers Clarkesville, Georgia

I am sure we are all now too familiar with the term “quarantine” as it relates to our current coronavirus situation. But, perhaps, some of us are not as familiar with this term as it applies to African violets.

We can alleviate stress from being in our homes for long periods by spending time with our plants. For me, it is a relaxing getaway from reality to “play with my plants.” But, alas, the plants can take only so much “playing” and that often makes me wonder if I need more plants! And, for me at least, the answer always seems to be “Yes.” Since I can’t go out anywhere to purchase more African violets and other gesneriads, I’ve been ordering some over the internet. So far, I have received a few lovely plants from the Violet Barn.

Why Quarantine?

When I bring any new plants into my home, I quarantine them for at least 90 days. Why? Because new plants can carry many pests and diseases that I would consider unwelcome visitors to my plant room. Some of these pests and diseases can be seen only with a microscope, and some might still be just eggs, waiting to hatch and attack all my plants if given half a chance. And some diseases they carry, like the impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV), might not show up for many months. I prefer to isolate all new plants, watch them for anything unusual, and once I determine they are pest free, they can join the other plants in my plant room.

Isolation Steps

Isolation, or quarantine, has several important steps. First of all, if your new plant has blooms on it, you must remove them before you even bring them into your home. I know this is so hard to do. After all, don’t you purchase African violets for their blooms? But thrips live in the blossoms, eating the pollen, plus

they can fly! If you bring a plant in with thrips on the blooms, you have a flying insect that would love to lay eggs on your other blooming plants — not a pretty picture. Thrips are notoriously hard to eliminate and can carry that dreaded INSV infection, which is untreatable. It is better to remove blooms from one plant than fight a thrips invasion on all your plants, or worse.

If your new plant has blooms ... you must remove them before you bring them into your home.

The second thing I do when bringing in a new plant is to wash the plant’s leaves with Dawn dish detergent and water and then rinse them well. This is to remove and kill most pests and eggs. Some people also remove all the dirt around the roots, wash the entire plant and repot it in proper soil with perlite added. I do not do this; instead I wait to repot for a couple of weeks, allowing the plant to recover from its change in environment.

Third, after the plant is dry, place it into a sealed Ziploc bag or domed container that can be sealed. This will prevent mites, which are tiny, from leaving the quarantine container in search of other plants. If the plant you put in the sealed container has moist (not wet) soil, you should not need to open this sealed container for 60 to 90 days. Watch the condensation on the inside of the bag or container.

If there is too much condensation, open the container in a room away from your plants for a couple of hours to allow the humidity to dissipate. If there is no condensation, check to make sure the soil is not too dry. Keep the plant in an area with light, but no direct sunlight.

Watch for Signs

Watch the plant closely for any sign of pests or diseases. If you see any sign of mites, thrips, or mealybugs, you can choose to treat just the one plant or just put it into the garbage. Treating one plant is so much easier than having to treat an entire collection.

Hopefully, there will be no pests or diseases on your new plant, and after the quarantine you can gradually open the bag to allow the plant to adjust to an

environment with less humidity. You can feel safe adding it to your collection and enjoying future blooms.

**If there is too much
condensation, open the
container ...**

And, hopefully, by the time your plant is out of quarantine, we will be too!

Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend?

Here's an easy way to support the
African Violet Society of America
at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

**Select African Violet Society of America
as your organization to support.**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Family Portrait: *Gesneria cuneifolia* 'Quebradillas'

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086

Email: pfkroll@me.com

The gesneriad family member whose portrait I have chosen for this issue is another one of the *Gesneria* species. I wrote about *Gesneria pedicellaris* in the March-April 2019 *AVM*. At that time, I explained that the genus *Gesneria* is one of many genera in the gesneriad family. I know, it can be confusing until you look closely at those two words: gesneriad and *Gesneria*.

Growing Conditions

The *Gesneria pedicellaris* I wrote about previously is one of the species that is quite tolerant of “normal” air and conditions. It grows “out” on my plant shelves. The other members of the genus *Gesneria* must be grown in enclosed or terrarium conditions. If they dry out, they are toast!

Flowering

As you can see from the photograph, *Gesneria cuneifolia* 'Quebradillas' is a good bloomer. It almost always has two or three open blooms. The blooms last for a few days, and more are always coming along.



Gesneria cuneifolia 'Quebradillas' is a good bloomer.

If they dry out, they
are toast!

Although this plant is covered inside an overturned jar, it sets its own seed quite readily. The stalks with the spent blooms are testimonial to that fact, and the brown seed pods on some of the stalks in the photo are proof of the seed having set. I recently sent seed from this plant to The Gesneriad Society's seed fund.

Potting Mix

I have never grown this plant in a pot larger than 2 1/2 inches. Like all *Gesneria*, it likes extra lime in its soil. The plants grow naturally in crevices, between limestone rocks. In the past several years, however, I have not added any extra lime to my soil mix for the plants that prefer it. I do add lime, but no extra, and these plants do just fine.

I water once a week with my regular fertilizer water and repot regularly, about every 4 to 6 months. Although I do not wick any plants in my collection, I'm quite certain these plants would be happy in those conditions. Mine grow under two T8 tubes that are on for 12 hours per day.

If you have never tried growing *Gesneria*, you may wish to give them a try. You will be rewarded with brightly colored orange-yellow blooms and bright green foliage.

Coming Events

Winter African violet shows and sales still might be cancelled because of the COVID-19 virus. This list represents those shows still scheduled on our website as of November 30, 2020. Be sure to check the AVSA website Events page (www.avsa.com/events), search the local club on Facebook, or contact the organizers below for the latest information.

■ February 12-13, 2021 — Florida

First Lakeland African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Christ Lutheran Church
2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd.
Lakeland, FL

Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sale); noon-5 p.m. (show)

Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (show and sale)

Mary Jane DiLorenzo: 863-529-5420

www.firstlakelandafricanvioletsociety.com

■ February 26-27, 2021 — Florida

Tampa African Violet Society
Show and Sale
Fellowship Hall, Journey Christian Church
4207 North Boulevard, Tampa, FL
Friday: noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mary Lou Harden: 813-924-2686
mlhard@verizon.net
www.tampafricanviolets.com

■ March 6-7 — Texas

Spring Branch African Violet Club
42nd Annual Spring Show and Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Dr.
Houston, TX

Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sale); 1-5 p.m. (show)

Sunday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (show and sale)

Vickie Crider: vcriders2@outlook.com

■ April 24 — Ontario, Canada

Lakeshore African Violet Society of Toronto
Annual Show & Sale
St. Philip's Lutheran Church
61 West Deane Park Dr.
Etobicoke, Ontario
9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Beverley Williams: 905-620-1149

beverleyandbrucewilliams@rogers.com

www.lakeshoreavs.com

Contest Entry —

The Thrifty Violet

Josh McKinney Madison, Alabama

During challenging economic times, violet growers must be cognizant of ways to maximize the value of our growing supplies. A good place to look for items on your list is at the dollar store. If you want pots for starting leaves or growing minis and semiminis, the 2-ounce condiment cups just need some holes drilled in them and they are ready to go. I still haven't figured out what to do with the lids! You can get a pack of 10 cups at one dollar store (hint: money doesn't grow on trees), but a larger pack is available from their competitor for an even better price per unit.

Furthermore, the \$1 plastic trays used for cat litter are sturdy enough for repotting, as other contributors have mentioned. Just line them with newspaper and make repotting much easier. If you want to plant a dish garden, dollar stores have 9 1/2-inch diameter plastic ones, as well as neat spherical 4 1/2-inch terrariums, both for \$1 each. A trailing violet or *Episcia* would look right at home in a dish garden and a round terrarium could be a unique home for mini African violets.



L to R: Amethyst in a dollar store dish garden; Heart's Delight in a bubble terrarium. Both containers sit in a dollar store cat litter box.

You can find many interesting plant containers at the dollar store.

Holiday Finds

During the Christmas season, stores add interesting plastic craft jars to the inventory, which make great wick-watering reservoirs for semis or minis. My favorite finds so far have been the small plastic boxes with clip-lock lids secured by their handles. They are translucent and come in graphite gray, blue and clear. For starting small seeds or cuttings, the clear ones would work best. I like to use them as trays to hold minis or young plants.

Container	Length	Width	Height
Cat litter pan	13"	18 1/8"	3 1/2"
Boxes w/ clip-lock lids	8 3/4"	6 1/8"	2 3/4"
Egg keeper	12 1/2"	5"	3"
Craft jar	N / A	2 1/8"	4"

Plastic Container Dimensions

For wicking reservoirs, plastic 8-ounce, round deli containers cost only a dollar for 10 containers. The lids are tricky to separate and aren't very sturdy. Even though they claim to be dishwasher safe, I hand-wash them. You can make two holes for two 2-inch pots or three holes for three 2-inch pots on one, or use one standard 4-inch pot. Using your imagination,

you can find many interesting plant containers at the dollar store.

In Spring

In the spring, rectangular plastic egg keepers become available. These are translucent and come with removable lids with a single hole. You can fill them with soilless mix, plant 12 cuttings, and replace the lid or dispense with the lid altogether and use only plastic wrap for taller cuttings.

When keeping the lid, you might want to cover the hole with plastic wrap. Remember to remove the plastic cover in the evening to allow the container to air out overnight.



Leaf starts in a plastic egg keeper.

A word of warning: the plastic shoebox containers found in some dollar stores are a bit flimsy and can crack over time. You can get stronger Sterilite brand containers that are a better value (88 cents in Alabama) at a big box store, as well as acrylic yarn for wicks. I use green yarn so algae won't be so apparent. The stores have an assortment of transparent plastic containers, which make good propagation boxes when you replace their lids with plastic wrap.

Simple Solutions

Sometimes, the simplest solutions are the best. Dale Martens mentioned reusing plastic sundae cups to grow seedlings on page 34 of the September-October 2020 *AVM*. I discovered they also can be repurposed

into wick watering cups if you keep the plastic collar that has a hole for the ice cream. It fits a 2 1/4-inch round pot well, though the container gets wobbly when the water level is too low.

Sometimes, the
simplest solutions are
the best.

Glass yogurt jars make nice reservoirs, as do small plastic single-serving cheesecake containers. Just make sure the container you choose allows you to view the water line or you won't know when to refill with fertilizer solution. Hope your trip to the dollar store is as productive as mine was!



L to R: Rob's Galiwinku, Kentucky Baby Bells, Rob's Whodunit, and Heritage Frolic in a blue box.

Contest Entry —

African Violets — A Hobby for All Ages and Interests

By Jere Trigg Spanish Fort, Alabama

Growing African violets is both challenging and rewarding and is a continuous learning process. It's not strenuous or exceedingly expensive, so the journey can begin for growers at any age and be taken as far as an individual's interest and time allow. Beginners usually concentrate first on growing healthy plants with symmetrical foliage and frequent blooming. They learn about the importance of light, potting mix, fertilizer and other factors critical to the health and appearance of their plants.

Gaining Confidence

Once they have sufficient confidence that they can grow violets successfully, hobbyists become interested in propagating the plants from leaves to share with their friends. Leaf propagation involves an entirely new set of questions to ponder: which leaves are best, how best to plant them, how to separate the babies, etc.



Photo 1. Jere's Roll Tide with crimson and white blooms. After addressing these questions and acquiring experience in producing more violets, some enthusiasts want to concentrate on growing the best quality plants possible to enter in shows and display their beauty. Shows also enable growers to become

familiar with new varieties, exchange ideas and meet friends in person they have known previously only through social media.

The overall process
from cross-pollination
to first bloom might
take up to one year
or longer.

Taking on Hybridizing

After experiencing the joy of growing beautiful violets, producing copies of their favorites and interacting with other enthusiasts at clubs and violet shows, some adventurous hobbyists decide to take on the ultimate challenge — hybridizing. It's not for everybody because it requires time, patience, growing space and discipline. Time is a factor because it takes about 4 months for a seed pod to mature, 2 weeks to 3 months for seeds to germinate after sowing, and 6 months to 1 year from seed germination to first bloom.

Patience is required because the overall process from cross-pollination to first bloom might take up to 1 year or longer. The cross-pollination might not take and it requires several weeks to confirm whether a seed pod is developing. Seeds are not always viable, and seedlings are susceptible to fungus attack after germination.

A hybridizer needs considerable growing space to grow out the seedlings to first bloom. Most seedlings

are different from each other in some way and are attractive but not extraordinary; only about 2 percent to 5 percent are truly unique and worth keeping. It requires great discipline to cull out those that have inferior qualities or are too similar to others.



Photo 2. Jere's Kaleidoscope with puff fantasy on blooms.

Sometimes, hybridizers choose two blooms that are favorites and perform a cross just to see what will happen. However, they might have a specific goal of producing a superior plant with certain qualities by crossing two parents that possesses such features. For example, Jere's Roll Tide (Photo 1) was developed specifically with the goal of producing a bicolored hybrid that possessed the crimson and white colors of the University of Alabama. I developed Jere's Kaleidoscope (Photo 2) with the goal of producing the puff fantasy markings similar to Cosmos Legend 2 but on a violet with stronger leaf stems not requiring leaf support. The cross-pollination of Jere's Pink Elephant with Rock Star was performed with the goal of producing hybrids with unusually large blooms like their parents but in a variety of bloom colors (Photo 3).

Hybridizing involves
some skill, but also a
lot of luck.

Worth the Effort

Hybridizing involves some skill, but also a lot of luck. Of course, the chances of success increase proportionately to the number of seedlings under evaluation. For those who take up the challenge, the prospect of developing a new bloom color or some other attribute never before seen makes the time and effort worthwhile.

With more knowledge and experience, new growers, young or "not so young" will discover over time which path they want to follow, whether it's a few plants in the windowsill, growing to show or hybridizing. But one thing is certain — they will be engaged in a fascinating journey that will likely last for a lifetime!



Photo 3. Seedlings from a cross aiming for large blooms in a variety of colors.

Contest Entry —

Streptocarpus: Divide and Conquer

By Terri Vicenzi Bloomington, Indiana

Streptocarpus plants are beautiful and showy members of the gesneriad family, and many hybrids grow vigorously and can become quite sizable. For growers new to *Streptocarpus*, it's not always clear when and how to go about dividing them. Doing so helps keep them healthy — streps can be particularly susceptible to root rot and sudden decline if not divided carefully.

When to Divide Streps

First off, I encourage growers to let their plants grow large if they have the space. Each of the “crowns,” or individual plants, is a source of successive bloom stalks and flowers. A larger plant translates to more eye-catching blooms and show-worthy specimens. Typically, I would not divide a strep until it is at least a year old and has three or more crowns. For vigorous hybrids, this could be sooner, but in any case, it is always best to wait until the roots have filled the pot and the plant is in good health.

If the plant you are dividing has not been repotted in a while, it's a good idea to leach fertilizer salts from the plant a few days ahead of dividing. This is accomplished by pouring several cups of warm water over the surface of the soil and allowing the plant to drain thoroughly and dry out a bit. Next, remove any older leaves from the plant that are beginning to yellow or are not likely to produce more bloom stalks. Although it might seem intimidating, don't be afraid to handle the plant with a firm hand, similar to how you might divide a perennial in your garden. I have found that a serrated knife works well to cut through the fibrous root ball and foliage.

Approaches to Division

One approach to dividing a large strep is simply to split the plant in half. With each divided piece, remove about a third of the root ball from the sides

and bottom, and then repot each section into an appropriately sized pot (see Photos 1 and 2). Alternatively, you can divide the strep into individual crowns, and trim each crown down so that it has two to three healthy leaves. In this situation, I like to transplant the divisions into 3-ounce Solo cups.

Whatever container you choose to use, make sure it is small, only slightly larger than the crown itself. It is important to place the crowns slightly above the rim of the pot and above the surrounding soil line. Emerging foliage can rot if the crowns are buried too deeply in the soil (see Photos 3 and 4). Water the plants with a light hand so that the media is damp but not overly wet.



Photo 1. Mature strep.



Photo 2. Mature strep divided in two.



Photo 3. Strep divided into four crowns.



Photo 4. Individual strep crowns transplanted.

Don't be afraid to handle the plant with a firm hand.

Let the Plants Recover

It is important to note that in either scenario, when you divide streps, you are massively disturbing the roots. This relative of African violets is much more vulnerable to transplant shock. I recommend that divided plants recover for a week or two in a bag or under a dome, away from the bright light of a growing stand or windowsill. Gradually open the bag or dome over 3 to 4 days to acclimate the plant to ambient room conditions.

If the strep wilts after removal, place it back in the bag or dome and allow additional time for the plant to recover. Once you move the streps to their growing area, continue to water carefully until the repotted plants show signs of new growth.

In Memory

Alice Doggett

Alice Doggett of Gloucester, Virginia, passed away August 7, 2020, at the age of 93. Alice became a member of the Richmond African Violet Society (RAVS) in 1968 and was awarded an Honorary Membership in 2006. She served as president of the society for 6 years (1971 to 1975 and 1979 to 1981) and as show chair numerous times.

Alice held memberships in the Mid Atlantic African Violet Society (MAAVS) and AVSA, participating in

national shows in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania. At RAVS shows, Alice won many awards over the years in horticulture and design. When her family moved from Richmond to a family home in Gloucester Point, Virginia, they invited the club to hold summer picnics on several occasions. She continued her love of African violets and her friendships with RAVS members as she and her family enjoyed life on the York River after leaving Richmond.

Contest Entry —

Chimeras Are Calling my Name

By Sandi Mynatt Jacksonville, Florida

To propagate or not to propagate ... that is the question.

I want to share a little with you about chimeras. First, let's define the word. Chimera is Swahili for "you'll be sorry." Chimeras are clearly the divas of the African violet world.

Chimeras probably are more responsible for luring plant-loving people into the violet-growing hobby than any other force in the universe. They are unique, beautiful, temperamental and expensive. I used to think that it was a rip-off to see them priced at ridiculous amounts on eBay. Some of them cost more than \$100 — egads! So, being the Do-It-Yourself Queen, I decided I could propagate them (much like my standard violets) for a fraction of that cost. I have been delusional in the past, but nothing comes close to this particular delusion.

I learned early on that you cannot just put down a chimera leaf like you can a regular violet leaf. Since they have mixed genes, some leaves will produce a bloom that looks nothing like the desired chimera — and other leaves will just laugh at you. You never know which personality will surface, but you can bet your sucker plucker it won't be the one you want.

Sucker Propagation

The methods of propagating these plants vary. I shall outline them briefly:

The first way is to inspect your thriving chimera for suckers. No, not the sucker in the mirror. If you see a small independent set of leaves growing, barely noticeable under the main canopy, you might have a chance of removing it with a sharp sucker plucker or X-Acto knife. This requires a certain amount of dexterity and control (and in my case, Band-Aids). My first attempt at this was less than stellar, fortunately

requiring no stitches. After you have removed this tiny leaf cluster you should settle it into moist soil in a cup with a lid to preserve humidity. Then wait for 6 to 24 months to see if it has the will to live. Rip Van Winkle probably awoke in time to see his plant take root and grow.

Chimeras are clearly
the divas of the
African violet world.

Crown Propagation

The second way is more brutal and should only be attempted after several drinks. If you are going to mess it up, it will hurt less that way. It is best to have 911 on speed dial. It involves removing the entire crown from a perfectly beautiful plant with the object of placing the decapitated crown into moist soil in a cup with a lid to preserve humidity and waiting for it to make roots. Or die. Then, you watch the indignant mother plant for signs of new leaves in the center of the plant around which the outer leaves have gathered to mourn the loss of their queen.

If you are very lucky and extremely patient, you will eventually see several clusters of baby leaves emerge from this wasteland and grow. Later, you can remove them ever so carefully and root them as you did the suckers. It is a lot like playing the lottery. Sometimes you win, and sometimes you don't. And while you are waiting for new leaves to form you have the dubious honor of seeing your ugly, pillaged plant daily and hearing it call you disparaging names.

Bloom Stalk Propagation

The third way is to attempt to root a bloom stalk. After removing the fresh blooms and cutting the stem to about 1-inch length, place it in a sealed cup with the precise amount of moisture, the perfect temperature, the exact amount of light, and wait ... and wait ... and wait. I have not had much success with this method. The ratio has been "zip to zip" so far. All I have done is cheat myself out of enjoying the blossoms on the mother plant in the desperate hope one of the stems will root.

Adding Rooting Hormone

A new method I have recently seen on a YouTube video might have a ghost of a chance. The video recommends gently scratching the surface of the bloom stalk where the stem bifurcates to produce two blooms. We shall call this the "Y spot." To this scratched spot, they apply a miniscule amount of rooting hormone gel. They leave the blooms attached to the plant and watch for tiny little leaves to form at that Y-shaped junction on the stalk. When these leaf clusters are large enough, they are

separated from the bloom stalk and rooted like a sucker. I think this might have the best possibility of success. The good news about starting at zero is that you have nowhere else to go but up.

To this scratched spot,
they apply a miniscule
amount of rooting
hormone gel.

So, if you have masochistic tendencies, if you thrive on insurmountable challenges, if you give up all hope of instant gratification, and if you are young enough to see the results before you die, then by all means grow and propagate chimeras.

Or you can do what I do: pay the \$100 and declare that it was worth every penny.

AVSA Booster Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from September 1, 2020, through October 31, 2020 Total: \$584

■ Geneva — \$100-\$499

North Coast Gesneriad and AVC, Mentor, OH

■ Two-tone — \$25-\$49

Missouri Valley AVC, Kansas City, MO
Bobby Salee, Owensboro, KY

■ Thumbprint — Under \$25

Danuta Neal, Naples, FL

In memory of Hanna Gruszcynska

Sandra Skalski, Mullica Hill, NJ

Lori Venta, Trenton, NJ



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Cirelda

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski

Hybridized by: P. Tracey

Best in Show, 2011

Semiminiature Trailer



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Plumberry Glow

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Hybridized by: Lyndon Lyon
Greenhouses/Sorano
Added to Honor Roll, 2011
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Wild Irish Rose

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Brandon Ericson
Hybridized by: S. Sorano
Tally Time, 2011
Standard

Contest Entry —

Up. Down. All Around: The Three Basic Plant Nutrients

By Scott Evans, MAg, Douglas-Sarpie Counties, Nebraska,
Extension Horticulturist Omaha, Nebraska

Have you ever noticed when you go to your favorite garden center that there are more fertilizer choices than cereal options at the grocery store? How do you decide which one to buy, and what do all those numbers mean?

Fertilizer Nutrients

Let's clear the air of a big misconception. Fertilizer is not food. Plants make their own food and fertilizer helps them do it. When you look at the product label you will see three numbers, such as 9-3-6 or 10-10-10. These numbers represent the percentage of a specific nutrient. It is an industry standard that those numbers will always represent nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), in that order. Excluding oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon, there are currently 15 or 16 essential elements that a plant needs. We are going to talk about the big three: N-P-K.



Fertilizer is not food, but helps plants make their own food. Image courtesy of Roxanne Clapp.

What do the nutrients do? A simplified way to remember what the big three do is: up, down, all around. Nitrogen helps with green vertical growth.

Phosphorus helps with roots below (and flowers). Potassium helps with overall plant health. Generally speaking, these are the three elements that a plant needs the most to be happy and healthy.

Plants make their own
food and fertilizer
helps them do it.

Nitrogen

Nitrogen is the most needed nutrient for plants. Nitrogen promotes green growth and helps with other biological processes. When a plant is lacking nitrogen, symptoms of deficiencies show up in older leaves first. You will also see poor new growth that is lighter in color. Most species and older cultivars of violets naturally have a light green color to their leaves. Knowing what your plant should look like will help determine if the plant is lacking nitrogen. Too much nitrogen can promote rapid green growth, brittle leaves and poor flower formation.

When you look at the product label you will notice that nitrogen comes as two or three different types. Most often you see ammoniacal, nitrate and urea nitrogen listed. Typically, urea is not plant ready until converted to ammonium by bacteria. That bacteria may or may not be present in a potting mix. Using only one formulation of nitrogen also can affect the soil pH (acidity or alkalinity). It is best to use a product that has at least two formulations of nitrogen, such as ammoniacal and nitrate. This helps reduce the chances of soil pH swings (learn more by reading "Nitrogen: All Forms Are not Equal," Cornell University Cooperative Extension).

Phosphorus

Phosphorus is the second-most needed nutrient. Phosphorus helps with root development and other biological functions and encourages flowers. When a plant is deficient in phosphorus, you often see leaf tips on older leaves browning, followed by turning dark green with a purplish hue on the backside of the leaf or the petiole. This can be challenging to diagnose because many of our violet cultivars have a red back. When a plant has too much phosphorus, it is exhibited through micronutrient deficiencies. Most fertilizers use the phosphate formulation of P_2O_5 .

Potassium

Potassium is the third-most needed nutrient for plants. Potassium helps with overall plant health. It aids in the movement of water, nutrient flow, carbohydrates and other biological processes. When a plant lacks potassium, you will see weak stems and yellowing of older leaf tissue (chlorosis), followed by localized death of tissue. It is rare to see potassium toxicity in a plant. However, if it occurs, we will see micronutrients such as zinc, magnesium, and manganese become deficient. Most products will use the soluble potash formulation of K_2O .

Nutrient Uptake

Soil pH and temperature of the growing space will also affect the availability and uptake of nutrients by plants. Traditionally speaking, most plants — including violets — prefer a soil pH around 6. This allows all of the macronutrients and micronutrients to be available for uptake. Both warm and cool growing conditions can affect the availability of nutrients such as nitrogen. Ideally, it is best to keep the temperature between 68 and 82 degrees (20 to 27 degrees Celsius). Remember that grow lights will produce some heat and keeping a thermometer on your stands helps monitor the temperature. New LED lights produce less heat so you might need to adjust your growing space accordingly.

Choose a Ratio

Which fertilizer ratio do you choose? Garden centers are flooded with endless options. An industry standard is the 3-1-2 or 1-1-1 ratio. This provides the plants with the essential nutrients they need to be

happy and healthy. We often forget that most fertilizers deliver the nutrients in a form of a salt. These salts can build up when using fertilizers with higher percentage numbers.

**Nitrogen is the most
needed nutrient for
plants.**

Some newer, natural-based products bypass the salts. However, they use manures, meal-based ingredients and oils. Those come with a pronounced aroma that might or might not be desirable in a home setting. Please remember that organic does not mean it is safer; fertilizers all contain chemicals. When using any fertilizer, remember that more is not better and always follow the labeled instructions.

Effect of Water

More growers have switched over from tap water to reverse osmosis (RO) water. If this is true in your case, you might want to choose a fertilizer that contains a portion of micronutrients. The RO process does an excellent job removing impurities from the water, and in some cases, it also removes micronutrients. Look for a product that also contains sulfur, iron, manganese and zinc.

When deciding on what to use, try to buy the smallest size package available. This way, if your plants react poorly to the product, you are not left with a quart or gallon of something you might never use again. If you decide to switch products, try the new product first on a few plants for 3 months before introducing it to the entire collection. This way, you can monitor for any issues.

Finally, if it isn't broke, don't fix it. If you found a product with which you get great results, there is no need to change.

AVSA 75th Anniversary: African Violet Firsts

By Dr. Jeff Smith

The species African violets and the first cultivars such as the “original 10” that were developed at the time of the AVSA’s founding 75 years ago all had blue single flowers. Foliage was green and all plants were standard sized. Since then, many mutations have been found and a large variety of plant types, flowers and foliage have become available.

Somewhere there had to be a “first” for each of these mutations or sports. This list is an attempt to give dates, plant names, registration numbers and hybridizers for many traits that have been developed in African violets. Please note that there might be some errors in this list as tracing back to the “first” of anything can be tricky. There are also some discrepancies in dates of when a trait was discovered and when the first cultivar was later registered. Enjoy learning about these firsts.

1939, double flower: Double Duchess (E. Wangbichler), no description available.

1940, pink flower: Pink Beauty (AVS-48) (F. Brockner), Single pink. Ovate, pointed. Standard.

1941, girl leaf: Blue Girl (AVS-48) (C. Ulery), Single blue-violet. Round girl foliage. Standard.

1942, white flower: White Lady (AVS-48) (P. Ruggeri), Single white. Plain.

1947, variegated crown: Silver Flute (833) 11/8/56 (E. Champion); Single white and blue. Variegated, ovate, fluted. Standard.

1949, fantasy flower: Fantasy (217) 12/05/49 (R. Behnke/Naylor), Single lavender to lavender-pink/dark purple fantasy. Plain. Large.

1950, Geneva edge flower: Lady Geneva (Geneva Nurseries, CA), no description available.

1950, Geneva edge pink flower: Pink Geneva (907) 8/4/57 (F. Tinari), Single pink and white. Pointed, cupped, quilted. Standard.

1950, small plant: Miss Liberty (385) 4/29/51 (F. Tinari), Single purple and white. Cupped, girl foliage. Standard; Little Geneva Princess (342) 11/2/52 (R. Baxter), Single blue and white. Serrated girl foliage. Semiminature.

1952, star flower: Purple Star, no description available; Star Sapphire (Robert Craig Co., PA), no description available.

1953, fringed flower: Unknown.

1954, double pink flower: Double Pink Cloud (187) 10/29/54 (L. Lyon), Double dark pink. Quilted. Large; Double Bountiful (L. Lyon), no description available; Double Pink Puff (188) 10/29/54 (L. Lyon), Double pink. Quilted. Large; Double Honey Bud (181) 4/5/54 (L. Lyon), Double pink and white. Quilted. Standard.

1954, double pink flower and girl leaf plant: Pink Dresden (R. Peters), no description available.

1954, trailer plant: Royal Blue Trailer (Tinari), no description available; Sky Trailer (Tinari), no description available; Snow Trailer (Tinari), no description available; Star Trailer (Tinari), no description available.

1955, bustle leaf and wasp flower: Bustles (Hotchkiss, IL), no description available.

1955, nondropping flower: #183 (H. Holtkamp, Sr.), no description available.

1958, green edge flower: Dorothy Gray (G. Gardens), no description available.

1958, variegated edge leaf: Tommie Lou (1744) 10/25/67 (Oden), Double white/light orchid center. Variegated dark green, plain, quilted. Large.

1961 variegated mosaic leaf: Lilian Jarrett Variegated (2902) 9/28/89 (F. Tinari), Double pale pink. Mosaic variegated medium green, pointed, serrated. Standard.

1963 coral pigment: Coral Satin (1536) 08/06/1965 (F. Tinari), Single bright coral-pink. Medium green, ovate, quilted. Semiminature.

1974 miniature trailer: Pixie Blue (2598) 09/16/1974 (L. Lyon), Single purple-blue/darker center. Plain, ovate. Miniature trailer.

1978 variegated trailer: Blue Star Lou (3302) 01/23/1978 (H. Rienhardt), Single light blue star. Variegated, plain. **Standard trailer:** Pink Star Lou (3304) 01/23/1978 (Rienhardt), Single medium pink star. Variegated. Standard trailer.

1978 variegated miniature trailer: Lora Lou (L. Lyon), Double rose-pink. Variegated. **Semiminiature trailer:** Lucky Lou (L. Lyon), Double blue. Variegated, semi-trailing. Standard trailer.

1979 microminiature: Pip Squeek (3603) 02/06/1979 (L. Lyon), Single pink star. Semi-trailing. Miniature trailer.

1980 chimera flower: Granger's Desert Dawn (4050) 9/15/80 (Eyerdom), Single chimera light pink two-tone fluted star. Plain, pointed. **Large chimera flower:** Granger's Valencia (4051) 9/15/80 (Eyerdom), Single chimera blue fluted star/white stripe. Plain, pointed. Large.

1985 brushed color flower: Optimara Dali (Holtkamp), Single white sticktite/dark purple patches. Medium green. Standard; Optimara Leonardo Davinci (8319) 12/14/95 (Holtkamp), Single white/vivid purple-red patches. Medium green, plain, heart-shaped, glossy, hairy, serrated. Standard; Optimara Michelangelo (8327) 12/14/95 (Holtkamp), Single white/purple-blue patches. Medium green, plain, pointed, hairy, serrated. Standard; Optimara Monet (8329) 12/14/95 (Holtkamp), Single white/purple-blue patches. Medium green, plain, pointed, hairy, serrated. Standard; Optimara Van Gogh (8338) 12/14/95 (Holtkamp), Single white/dark lilac patches. Medium green, plain, hairy. Standard; Optimara Gauguin (8311) 12/14/95 (Holtkamp), Single white star/dark lilac patches. Medium green, plain, hairy. Standard.

1992 yellow flower: His Promise (N. Blansit), Double white/yellow overlay. Medium green, plain, glossy. Small standard.

Correction to Best Varieties

In the November/December issue of *AVM*, page 27, the name of one of our Best Varieties was misspelled. No. 14 should read 'Rose Bouquet.' The description is correct for this variety.

Thank you again to all who voted for the Best Varieties. We hope you participate again by voting before June 30, 2021.



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Eternal Orbit

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti

Hybridized by: P. Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses

Best in Show, 2012

Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Buckeye Nostalgia

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Hybridized by: P. Hancock

2020 Best Varieties List

Hybridized in 2012

Standard



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Petite Blarney

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Hybridized in 2012

Miniature

Contest Entry —

Gesneriads Make Great Annuals for the Garden

By Linda Sumski St. Louis, Missouri

You do not have to live in a tropical climate to enjoy growing gesneriads outside. During warmer summer months, you can plant many gesneriads directly into your garden (without pots) and grow them as annuals. Most of all, you do not have to settle for gesneriads you normally find at local nurseries, like various achimenes or the “ever popular” *Streptocarpus* subgenus *Streptocarpella* ‘Concord Blue.’

In June 2020, I spent much of my time grooming, thinning out and repotting my large collection of houseplants, most of which are African violets and other gesneriads. As with other club members, I had an excess amount of plants and did not know what to do with all of them. Shows and sales were cancelled due to the terrible COVID-19 pandemic and I had no room left on my shelves.

Excess Plants ... or Opportunity

I either had to throw away extra African violets or give them to whomever I could find who would take

them. But as for my other gesneriads, I had a better idea planned for some of them; I decided to plant a few outside in my garden and treat them as annuals. In my collection, many of my gesneriads (like episcias and streptocarpus) are grown for pleasure rather than for show since I never can turn many of them into decent show plants.

My streptocarpus were pot-bound in 5- to 6-inch pots and needed to be divided and repotted. After cutting *Streptocarpus* ‘Cicero’ into smaller sections, I planted a few clumps outside in my shade garden on the north side of our house. One section of *S.* ‘Cicero’ had hardly any roots, but I planted it anyway in a spot where it would not wilt from direct sunlight. I then planted the other clump where it received only a brief amount of early morning sun.

Surviving the Outdoors

Since it was already the middle of June here in St. Louis (summer temperatures were rapidly heating up), I expected my streptocarpus to go into shock

and die or get scorched from early morning sun. But to my surprise, they all survived! Both plantings displayed some initial signs of stress or leaf scorching, but they quickly recovered and continued to flourish.

At the end of October, my streptocarpus still were growing strong in my garden. They looked green and full, with a few blossoms left for me to enjoy. So far, we only had one night with a light frost when I had to cover them with sheets and a bucket for protection. Otherwise, nighttime temperatures at that



Streptocarpus ‘Cicero’ still surviving outside in my shade garden in mid-October.

point were mostly in the 40s, with daytime temperatures in the 50s and 60s.

Episcias also make great annuals for the garden. However, I noticed episcias do not last as long outside in the St. Louis area. In June, I planted an *Episcia* outside next to my streptocarpus, but in early October it quickly succumbed to our colder morning temperatures.

I will continue to plant episcias and streptocarpus in my garden each summer, especially episcias, which I struggle to keep alive indoors. Episcias love our hot, humid summers! I know it will not take long for them to grow and bloom, allowing me to enjoy their beautiful leaves and blossoms for a few months out of the year.

To my surprise, they all survived!

Treat as Annuals

Many of us have extra plants to get rid of. So, when temperatures warm up, instead of throwing those extra plants away, try planting them outside in your garden. But just remember ... once your gesneriads are planted outdoors, be safe and dispose of them properly at the end of your growing season. These "annuals" are not meant to be brought back inside!

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from September through October 2020 Total: \$1,175

■ Geneva — \$100-\$499

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In memory of Hortense Pittman

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'WIN x YOW' and Family

By Ronn Nadeau website: www.NadeausAfricanVioletSeeds.com

This article is the second in a series on my hybridizing efforts. The first is titled "WIN x SKI' and Family" and was published in the November/December 2020 issue of *AVM* (page 18). The series describes my attempts to find African violet crosses that produce seeds that lead to attractive new plants. The 'WIN x SKI' article contains many details and photos on how those seeds made 16 seedlings that were evaluated during their first bloom. In this article, I describe a different cross, 'WIN x YOW' (see Photo 1). Because I used the same methods with the seeds from both crosses, and because they were grown concurrently in a group with other crosses, readers can refer to the November/December 2020 article for details about how I conducted the 'WIN x YOW' evaluation.



Photo 1: 'WIN' (left) and 'YOW' served as parents for this cross.

About the Parents

'WIN', the pod parent in this cross, has reddish pink, pansy-shaped flowers, grows large and symmetrical, and makes large pods full of seeds when pollinated with viable pollen. However, its yellow pollen sacs (anthers) contain granular (not powdery) pollen, which makes it useless for pollinating. Many African

violet varieties, especially those with fancy or double flowers, have nonproductive pollen, but simpler flowers like those of 'WIN' also can have granular pollen.

Each 'WIN x YOW'
seedling will possess
its own unique DNA.

'WIN' has single pansy-shaped flowers and petals that drop off at maturity. Such varieties are described as "droppers." 'YOW' has white and blue flowers that

vary in pattern and sometimes go completely white. The plant grows symmetrically, and its leaves are distinctly flat and plain. Its anthers contain powdery pollen that readily causes pod and seed formation on receptive varieties like 'WIN'. When 'YOW' flowers reach maturity and die, they stay attached to flower stems until removed manually. Such varieties are called stick tights, as opposed to droppers. Both 'WIN' and 'YOW' were fathered by pollen from a stick-tight variety,

Optimara myTemptation (H. Holtkamp, hybridizer).

I sometimes am asked by African violet fans why their plants never make pods. If a flower is not pollinated successfully by an insect or a person, it dies after showing off its petals for a week or so. But when pollination succeeds, a pod forms and clearly shows by around 2 weeks after pollination.

Adding Stick-tight Varieties

Most of the varieties I use during hybridizing are my own hybrids. However, over the past several years I have added stick-tight varieties like Optimara my-Temptation, Cajun's Coujon (B. Thibodeaux), Victorian Parasol (S. Sorano), and many others to my tool kit of genes. I give my hybridizing varieties 3-letter names to facilitate labeling of flowers as to date of pollination, names of the parents, and how many flowers were pollinated (see Photo 2).

Two months after sowing the 'WIN x YOW' seeds, the pot had about 70 seedlings large enough to transplant. Sixteen of them went into 2.5-inch square pots and the rest were discarded. Later, the 16 were transplanted into 3-inch pots. At 5 months after sowing, the seedlings, in four trays with four plants per tray, were photographed (see Photo 3) and evaluated while still in their 3-inch pots.

Results

We removed one flower from each of the 16 'WIN x YOW' seedlings and photographed the set (see Photo 4). Ten of the seedlings had pink or red flowers and six had blue or purple ones; eight had bicolored flowers; the pansy and star shapes split evenly at eight to eight. There were six stick-tights and 10 droppers. I am pleased with these results and plan to offer 'WIN x YOW' seeds, along with other seeds, on my website. If you grow 'WIN x YOW' seeds, you can expect similar results.

However, each 'WIN x YOW' seedling will possess its own unique DNA.

I saved five of my 16 'WIN x YOW' seedlings, and named them WY.1, WY.2, ... WY.5. Cloning these from leaf cuttings is underway. The resulting plants will be evaluated for growth habit, bloom, attractiveness, and on whether they have good pollen or make good pods and seeds. I expect the cloned plants will look even better than their seedling counterparts.

In my experience, a clone's growth habit is often better than its corresponding seedling's growth. Also, clones tend to outperform their juvenile seedlings when it comes to sexual reproduction — the clone's pollen and eggs tend to be more viable.

Why have I focused lately on crosses with 'WIN' as the mother? Because it is an amazing bloomer and never takes a rest. The seedlings that result from crossing it with certain outstanding collector varieties are good to excellent. This provides good value to growers who buy seedlings, who range in experience from novice to expert, and reside worldwide. Some just have to see for themselves that nice violets can indeed be grown from seeds!



Photo 2: A tiny flag on the flower stem clearly marks its 3-letter name.



Photo 3: Seedlings in 3-inch pots.



Photo 4: One flower from each of 16 varieties from the cross.

Preview

My next article will describe hybridizing and seed production with miniature African violets. I search for



Photo 5: An interesting new seedling from the 'WIN' x 'JAY' cross.

'mini x mini' crosses that are better than ones I have now in terms of attractiveness, pod formation rate, and seeds per successful pod.

An experiment in progress examines 12 different mini crosses. I hope these seedlings will be in bloom for that *AVM* article.

'WAL' (Photo 5), an interesting new seedling that arose from my 'WIN x JAY' cross, might be updated in my next article. So far, every flower on seedling 'WAL' has shown yellow marks on its petals. I planted leaves to see how the flowers would appear on second-generation plants. The leaves made plants that now have small buds, so I will soon have the answer.

“Perfectly Pittman” Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

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AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20**



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Harbor Blue

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Hybridized by: T. Weber
Added to Honor Roll, 2013
Large Standard



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Edge of Darkness

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Hybridized by: P. Sorano/
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouse
Hybridized in 2014, added to
Best Varieties in 2020
Large Standard

Regional Growing or Individual Practices?

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

Our wonderful editor has put out a call for articles dealing with regional growing practices. I have thought quite seriously about this topic and the more time I spend doing so, the more I realize that, at least for me, I think more in terms of individual growing practices.

No matter what type of growing or gardening we do, each of us needs to develop horticultural practices that will work for us. Every growing situation is at least slightly different, even within regions of the country where we reside.

Soil Mix Choices

I have always admired the Canadian growers' plants in shows and in their individual growing areas, having been fortunate to have visited many friends to the north. The growers in Ontario (closest to my home) have always sworn by and used the soil mix formulated by hybridizer Ernie Fisher. I now am hearing that several of those growers of wonderful show plants are changing their mixes to comply with their individual needs. This is exactly what I am addressing here.

I can remember attending presentations at conventions where the speaker would advise, "You have to use this or that in your soil mix" or "These plants have to be grown in such-and-such a mix." It took me a while to realize that no one recipe will work for everyone! One "size" does not fit all!

Growing Conditions Vary

I have been growing African violets and gesneriads since the mid-1950s — longer than I sometimes care to admit. Each location I have lived in demanded changes in my soil mix and watering frequency, temperature adjustments, and other tweaks or changes.

... I am still learning,
experimenting and
applying what I learn.

I am frequently asked for my soil recipe(s), which I share most willingly, but always with the caveat "this is what I use, but your growing conditions may require adjustments."

I have stated many times in my articles that I do not wick-water anything. I am, however, not referring only to conditions such as wicking vs. saucer watering, mat watering, etc. Those are primary decisions each grower must make. After that comes a long list of how to best accomplish the results desired.

Growers need to make adjustments constantly. If you wish to grow for show, you must make up and follow strict schedules to achieve the proper and desired results.

Any type of growing: for show, for pleasure, for propagation, or whatever, requires you to adapt your basic conditions and attention to the requirements of your plants. Soil, temperature, light, water and fertilizer are those basics to consider, and each of them has a broad spectrum within it to decide upon, choose and try. "If it ain't broke; don't fix it" is often stated and I strongly agree.

When Trying Something New

Should you decide to try something new, try whatever that is on only a few plants and never on your entire collection. Should your new choice produce better results than what you had been doing, try that

on a few more plants. Gradually convert your collection to the new choice or technique.

Never, ever, try anything “wholesale” on your entire collection at once. I have heard horror stories from those who have done so. They will never do that again! Lessons learned the hard way are most vivid in our memories.

Even after all these years of growing, I am still learning, experimenting and applying what I learn in order to achieve the desired results. Do whatever you must do in your own conditions to achieve the results you desire.

Tips and Techniques: Pantyhose as Wicks

By Dale Martens

For a few decades, I used cut strips of pantyhose as wicks because I had a steady supply since I wore them at my job.

Cut strips from clean pantyhose about 1/4- to 1/2-inch wide from the toe upward, stopping at the hip



Cut thick strips along the leg to use as wicks.

area, which is too thick. Then cut each loop open and stretch the nylon.

The length of the wicks will vary, depending on whether the loop comes from the area closer to the toe or upper thigh.



Soak the pantyhose strips in soapy water before potting.



Registration Report

By Joe Brunns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

There are no new registration applications for this registration period.

■ Registration Change

The following has been changed at the request of the hybridizer:

Girls Night Out

•(10893) — Change name to **Girls' Night Out**.

Coming Soon: A Newly Designed Website

Since the Virtual Violet Convention last summer, a small group of volunteers has been working diligently to update the AVSA website. The feedback on the pictures, colors and function of the virtual convention gave us a springboard of motivation on which to build a more attractive and engaging experience for our members and the public.

The new website strives to provide visitors with easy navigation and lots of pictures, coupled with information on how to grow and show. We are in the process of tying the visual, front-facing website to a

much more robust back-end application that will manage the administrative side of AVSA membership, such as billing, membership renewals and convention registration, just to name a few. There still is some work to be done, but we hope to launch sometime during this first quarter of 2021.

When it launches, members can go to www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org to browse the new site. Watch for updates on our social media pages and *AVSA News* and in the March issue of *AVM*.



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Contest Entry —

Design in the Time of COVID

By Sylvia Leeds Quinlan, Texas

Perhaps you have read or seen the movie “Love in the Time of Cholera,” a love story by Colombian and Nobel Prize-winning author Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Although cholera has been virtually wiped out with antibiotics and a vaccine, COVID-19 still is raging.

The pandemic has affected the entire world with public closures and cancellations. Most of us have been sheltering in place with only spouses and plants for company. Violet meetings, shows and conventions have been cancelled, and growers and designers have probably found themselves with lots of time on their hands. As a result, plants may be thriving, but creativity may be languishing.

Maybe it is time to take inventory of supplies and equipment so that you can look forward to the day when all this will be over and life can resume to normal. As a seasoned designer, you probably possess boxes and bins of containers, dried plant materials and miscellaneous figures you can reuse and recycle two or three times a year for shows and conventions. New or “wannabe” designers, however, might lack supplies but be surprised to learn that they can find line material and mechanics in their own homes, yards and neighborhoods for virtually no charge. Consider these suggestions:

• **Leaves.** Leaves of outside plants come in a variety of shapes and sizes.



A sample of different types of leaves I found in my landscape.

Your landscaping probably contains several different kinds of leaves. Do not be afraid to clip some, dry them pressed in a heavy book, and use spray paint and glue for the perfect backdrop in a design. You also can cut leaves to size or group them together to form just the right shape.

•**Twigs and seed pods.** Walk around a wooded area, keeping your head down, and you will probably see twigs, small limbs and seed pods in interesting shapes. Wisteria twigs, for example, are curly, and the plants drop twisted pods throughout the year. By the time they fall, they already have dried, so you can easily paint and mold them to fit into your design.

•**Bark.** Various small trees and plants shed their bark throughout the year. Crape myrtles, philodendrons and palm trees are examples. This bark often peels back dried and is easy to cut or pull off. Look around under your trees and plants for this bark. Then use scissors, paint and glue to make it fit perfectly in your design.

•**Household containers.** Often, you have the perfect line material and blossom for your design but cannot decide on — or do not have — a container of the perfect size or color. Consider looking in your bathroom



Curly twigs and dried seedpods.



Bark can peel and fall off plants, or you can cut it off and dry it.

cabinet, china hutch, pantry and even along the beach. Sometimes, the perfect holder will be a



Household containers come in handy, as can found objects like seashells. It also helps to stock up on a variety of paints, glue, glitter and fabric stiffener.

champagne glass, the lid of hair spray cans or cologne bottles, food products or seashells. Dollar stores, yard sales and flea markets also have options for purchasing inexpensive containers.

•**Paint and glue.** I have often told my club members that, in my opinion, spray paint and hot glue are a designer's best friends. Spray paint comes in many colors and options including metallic, gloss and matte. You can find these choices at home stores, grocery stores and online. Glitter comes in all colors and can add interest or pizzazz to any design. Hot glue guns are inexpensive and almost a necessity while designing. Fabric stiffener works on limp plant material, as well as fabric.

As time and COVID-19 march on, we all hope and pray that the pandemic lifts, and we are able to show our designs at spring shows, sales and the national

Plants may be thriving,
but creativity may be
languishing.

convention. But if you cannot get out much, don't worry. Your saving grace might be as simple as a stroll in the yard or a walk in the park.

Hopefully, like "Love in the Time of Cholera," we all will be able to resume our love of showing violets and designs in the near future. In the meantime, stay safe, wear your mask, social distance, think positive and prepare.



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Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

S. 5f clone *orbicularis* var. *purpurea*

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Sandra Skalski

Best in Show, 2014

Species

Violet Treasures Await Your Discovery

By Carolee Carter, AVSA Publications Chair

Email: publications@avsa.org

In my recent process of going through every issue of *African Violet Magazine* from 1947 to 2020 to verify the accuracy of the contents provided in the Index of Magazine Articles, I have discovered an amazing fact. (And thank you, Terry Klemesrud, for all the hard work you have done over the past dozen or so years updating the index.)

Locate Article Topics

Have you ever used the Index of Magazine Articles to research a certain subject and then get that past issue from your bookshelf to read it? Well, what if you didn't have that issue? What if you only have 10 or more years of back issues of *AVM*? Did the information wall slam its door? Well guess what? No, it didn't!

I don't think that many of you are aware of a project that late AVSA President Richard Nicholas started with the Smithsonian Biodiversity Heritage Library back in 2017. He worked with that institution to digitize *African Violet Magazine* from the year of its inception — 1947 — to 2015! What does that mean to you?

Well, say you want to read any article that has been published about African violet pathogens or fertilizers. Here is how to find past articles (through the most recent issue): You open avsa.org, click on "Magazine," then scroll to the "Index of Magazine Articles." Once there, highlight 4 or 5 years (or even as many years of back issues as you currently have), put in your search terms, and voilà, you find a number of articles to read, including their page numbers.

Reading Articles in Back Issues

What if you find a number of articles from older issues that you don't have? Are you out of luck? No! If the articles were published between 1947 and 2015, you can visit the Biodiversity Heritage Library

website (<https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/146187>), and choose the year(s) you wish to visit to find your article, go to that year and then access the page number. Even easier — when you are on the AVSA website, click on "Member Content," then "AVM Digitized Back Issues," and it takes you directly to the BHL AVM site.

Now, here is the really good part. What if you just want to see what topics were being discussed in any of those early issues? When you're in the AVSA Index of Magazine Articles, leave the Author Last Name and Article Title search bars blank and just click on any year, and guess what? You can see the title of every article written that year! Or, you could highlight a number of years at one time in the index with your search term to see articles written during the years you've selected (by clicking on one year and then holding down the Shift key and clicking on several years below that.)

Then, you visit the Biodiversity *AVM* web page and click on that year, retrieve that issue, go to the page, and there's your article to read! Not only that, you can print it out, and you can search the entire issue on that site as well! I have every *AVM* from 1975 to present, but now I can access any missing articles for the past magazine years I don't have.

Last, if you're in the mood to browse, it was so entertaining and informative to just go through every issue page by page to see how our organization has evolved. Our 75th Anniversary is a perfect time to explore past people and practices. Seeing the photos from the shows with the men in suits and the women in dresses and hats, as well as seeing what growers' stands and their plants looked like way back then is truly eye-opening.

Have fun exploring, my violet friends!

75th Anniversary: Celebrating Showrooms



Awards table at 2011 National Convention in Philadelphia/Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Photo by Mel Grice.



Showroom and awards table at the 2012 Joint Convention with African Violet Society of Canada in Detroit. Photo by Mel Grice.



Awards table at 2013 AVSA National Convention in Austin, Texas. Photo by Mel Grice.



Display of ferns and African violets created by Holtkamp Greenhouses (Optimara) greeted attendees of the 2014 National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, as they entered the show room. Photo by Mel Grice.

75th Anniversary: What Makes African Violets Flower?

By Christopher J. Currey

Editor's note: For the 75th Anniversary of AVSA, I reviewed many articles that appeared in AVM from 2010 through 2015. This article by Christopher Currey stood out. It first appeared in the March/April 2011 issue.

"Why has my African violet stopped flowering?" This is not the first time, nor the last time, that you will hear this question asked. However, to understand the answers to this question, it will be useful to first review what causes flowering in African violets.

Flowering Terminology

Several terms help explain or describe the flowering process. *Flowering* generally refers to open, blooming flowers and is the result of three processes: 1) flower induction, 2) flower initiation, and 3) flower development. Flower induction is an internal chemical signal a plant produces to begin flower production. Flower initiation is the formation of tiny flower buds. Flower development is the process of tiny buds developing into fully opened flowers. So, the next step is to look at the factors controlling flowering in African violets.

Plant Maturation

Before plants can induce flowers, they must be mature. Plants are similar to animals regarding their ability to become reproductive. Just like animals, plants have a juvenile period. For herbaceous plants like African violets, the juvenile period usually is matter of months after seeds' germination. Once a plant has passed through its juvenile stage, it is considered mature and can flower. Fortunately for most violet growers, the juvenile stage is not a problem since plants are propagated from leaves off mature flowering plants and are capable of flowering.

Once plants are mature, the flowers of most potted plants form in response to day lengths, cool tem-

peratures, or automatically regardless of the environment. The day length, or photo period, causes many plants to flower. For instance, short days cause flowering for poinsettias and chrysanthemums. A period of cool temperatures, or vernalization, results in flowering of plants like Easter lilies and florist azaleas. However, African violets do not initiate flowers in response to day lengths or cool temperatures.

Autonomous Flowering

Flower induction and initiation in African violets is called "autonomous," which means that once plants are mature, flower buds are automatically formed. In African violets, flower buds are borne in leaf axils, so every time a new leaf forms, new flower buds are initiated with it. So, if your violets are not flowering, either: 1) the tiny flower buds that have initiated are aborted and won't develop into open blossoms, and/or 2) the appearance of new leaves (with their new flower buds) has slowed down.

Both of these problems can be the result of low light levels, cold temperatures or inadequate fertilizer. To get blossoms back on your plants, increase the light levels to between 500 and 1000 foot candles. Increase day/night air temperatures to between 65 and 75 degrees and add water-soluble fertilizer when watering at one-fourth to one-half the recommended label rate. By doing this, you will encourage the growth of new leaves with new flower buds and prevent initiated flower buds from aborting (allowing them to develop into blooming flowers).

Armed with this knowledge of how flowering in African violets occurs, hopefully you will be able to get and keep your violets in flower all year, every year.

75th Anniversary: Celebrating Design

The shadowbox flower arrangement at the 2006 convention in Minneapolis celebrated AVSA's 60th

anniversary with "60 years of flowers." Photos by Karyn Cichocki.



Contest Entry —

How Much Is Too Much?

By Beverley Williams Brooklin, Ontario, Canada

We were blessed with excessive rain in spring 2019 — so much so that flooding occurred in different regions of the province. The thought of having our canoe at the ready had been at the back of our minds. We were all so very tired of the gloomy, dark, rainy days that had replaced the gloomy, dark, snowy days.

For many years, my husband, Bruce, and I have been growing African violets and gesneriads of many types in our unfinished basement. The open basement has concrete floors and poured concrete walls with some insulation and random heater vents. The air circulates freely because there are no interior walls. We also live in an area that has a high water table. The basement stays relatively cool, but not excessively warm — about 72 degrees during the day with the heat on and 65 degrees at night during the winter and spring. We lower our temperature at night to help with the heating bills in the winter. It can get pretty cold here in the winter in southern Ontario. Don't be fooled into thinking that we have mild, moderate winters. We don't. Temperatures fluctuate sometimes to extremes.

Controlling Humidity

Having a relatively cool, but not excessively warm, growing area is fine if your plants enjoy that type of environment. The humidity can get excessive at times, especially during the wet spring and summer months. To maintain it, we use a dehumidifier to keep the humidity down to 50 percent. During the winter months, it rarely comes on because the ground is frozen. Once the colder weather settles in and the ground freezes, the dehumidifier should stop working because the humidity in the basement usually is about 35 percent.

Yet with the torrential downpours that we experienced this spring, we expected to see copious

amounts of water from the dehumidifier's runoff collected in the large garbage can. The garbage can holds approximately 32 gallons. We use the water collected from the dehumidifier to water our plants because it measures neutral or 7 on the pH scale. Although it is good for watering plants, growers have to compensate for the lack of nutrients in dehumidifier water. Other times, when there is no water collected by the dehumidifier, we use tap water. Not being overly concerned about whether the humidity was under control, we paid no attention to the "beast" sitting in the corner of the room. We heard it come on when we were in the plant room and at other times.

We use a dehumidifier
to keep the humidity
down to 50 percent.

Noticing Plant Problems

Then, we were with our plants and noticed that an African violet had developed crown rot! What? Where did that come from? Like most growers, we are slaves to our watering schedule and try not to overwater. Watering on a schedule usually takes care of most problems, but finding crown rot on an African violet was unheard of in our conditions because the humidity is under control. The dehumidifier was working; we heard it come on. But very little water was being collected in the garbage can.

OK, so one of our many African violets had developed crown rot. The entire top of the plant had rotted off at the soil surface. I tried cutting off the rot and putting the crown under cover in new soil in the hope

that it would re-root. That did not happen. By the time we had found the poor baby, it was too late. All the leaves were falling off, so there was no way to save this one. So, maybe it was an isolated incident? Then, we found another one, and another one. Now, what is going on? It was too odd that not just one, but several, plants were found to have crown rot.

We checked the hydrometers that are placed on various shelves around the area where we grow our plants and at different levels. Some of the bottom shelves were showing 70 percent humidity, and some of the higher shelves were showing 50 to 60 percent. The *Streptocarpus* (as well as *Petrocosmea* and *Primulina*) really like that higher humidity and they were on the lower shelves where it is cooler and more humid. No problem here. It is always more humid closer to the basement floor.

Troubleshooting

The dehumidifier was working ... right? There was some water in the large garbage can in which we collect the water. So, Bruce, who is handy, took a look at the new, less than 1-year-old dehumidifier. It showed that everything was alright, and it came on. It was still cold outside and the ground had not completely thawed yet. We left the basement and checked on the dehumidifier again another day. It still showed 50 percent, which is the default setting.

Then we found another African violet with crown rot and lots of plants that still were wet when they should have needed watering, according to our watering schedule. And the basement felt cooler and damper than it should.

The ground should have been thawing out and the dehumidifier should have been working like a “mad beast.” But it was not. Now, it had a code number showing instead of the percentage. My handy husband was prepared to do major surgery. But instead he called the company, using the number on the manual in the section for “Got a problem? Call us.”

The less than 1-year-old dehumidifier was on strike! The company said it had to be replaced because of a defect recognized by the manufacturer. It was not working at all, yet all this time we thought it was doing its job.

Like most growers, we
try not to overwater.

Replacing the Beast

So, off we went to our local store to get a new dehumidifier. Fortunately, the defective dehumidifier was still under warranty. When does that ever happen that your “beast” quits when it is still under warranty? Usually it quits just days after the warranty expires! The store from which we bought the dehumidifier replaced it free of charge. Yea! We were back in business. The new “beast” was in the basement and had not shut off for days. We now had lots of water in the garbage can to use to water our plants. But, we still kept a watch on the dehumidifier that summer and the following fall and winter.

Eventually, we purchased a different brand of dehumidifier to replace the one that we received under warranty. The replacement dehumidifier had not performed any better than the first one after a period of time. We still have it in reserve, but the new one is working great! It has run lots of water into the garbage can all spring and summer. We also had a long, wet spring again this past year with lots of rain. It seemed to go on forever, but we have been rewarded with a warmer-than-normal summer. The basement continues to be quite cool without air conditioning during the summer. The streptocarpus, primulinas and petrocosmeas are extremely happy and continue to thrive in these conditions. Our African violets are on the upper shelves, which are warmer.

So, sometimes too much is too much. Too much humidity combined with a cool basement did not let our plants dry out as they should. We kept watering on our schedule and did not realize that the plants were not drying out as they should. Lesson learned, and we now keep an eye on that beast in the basement to make sure this does not happen again. We know we should be happy that we have such high humidity, and those who don't are probably shaking their heads with envy, but remember, along with high humidity comes mildew and crown rot.



Photo Credit: Winston Goretsky

Mac's Misty Meadow

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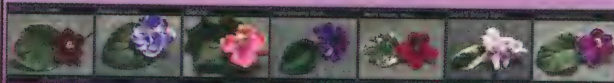
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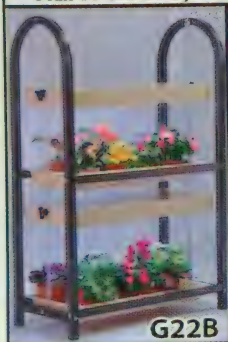
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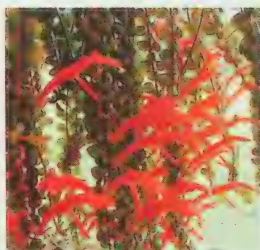
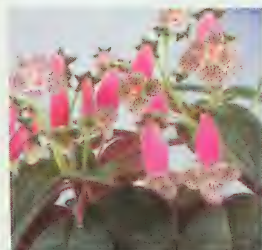
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Volume 74 Number 2

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Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti
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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308

Email: president@avsa.org

As I write this article, winter still has its grip on parts of the country. The cold weather does not help our violets and gesneriads. We hope that your plants are beginning to perform for you in the event shows occur. Take time to give them a little extra tender loving care, which will encourage them to bloom and perform to their best potential.

It was truly a difficult decision your Executive Committee and Convention Director, Kathy Lahti, made to cancel our 75th Anniversary Convention in Atlanta. The health and safety of our members is of utmost importance to us. The Sheraton Atlanta was gracious to allow us to save May 28 to June 4, 2023, for the Atlanta Convention. In lieu of an in-person convention this year, we will again host a virtual convention May 30 through June 6. Susan Anderson is Cyber Diamond Celebration Chair and Mary Corondan is Show Chair. Mark your calendars and get ready to participate in this celebration. See additional information, including how to volunteer, on page 8.

Sad News

It is with heavy heart that we announce the passing of Past President Mary Boland on December 23, 2020. Mary served as AVSA President from 1989 to 1991. Her services were under the direction of Jefferson Funeral Chapel with interment at Quantico on January 7, 2021. She truly will be missed by all who knew her. Dorothy B. "DoDe" Whitaker passed away November 16, 2020. A Celebration of Life service was held on November 29, 2020, at Riverside Presbyterian Church in Cocoa Beach, Florida. DoDe was active in AVSA as a hybridizer and as Convention Director in the past. Bill Paauwe of Long Island, New York, died January 4. He and his wife, Kathryn, were commercial vendors in the 1980s and 90s. We extend thoughts and prayers to these late members' families and friends. May they rest in peace.

Be an AVSA Booster

See page 32 to learn how you can become an AVSA Booster by participating in the Annual Appeal. Randy Deutsch, Fundraiser Chair, along with his committee members and others, have developed a way for you to help secure AVSA's present and future.

AVSA Office Update

Amy Carruth, Office Manager, reports that the iMIS Membership Software has been implemented and is proving to be helpful in the day-to-day operation of the office. Thank you again to all who helped implement this software.

The newly updated website has "gone live." Thank you to Candace Baldwin, the Website Committee, Joyce Stork, Tom Glembocki, Richard Craft and many others for their hard work in updating our website.

Editor Update

Our *AVM* editor, Teresa Odle, is retiring July 1. First Vice President Susan Anderson will chair a search committee. See page 49 and the AVSA website for more information. Teresa has done an outstanding job, bringing *AVM* an up-to-date look and feel. We will miss you, Teresa, and thank you for a job well done!

Membership

Membership is a continuing concern to AVSA and to local affiliates. We encourage you to reach out with your suggestions of ways that AVSA can increase our membership and how your local affiliate has succeeded in increasing your membership. One of our goals continues to be increasing membership through individual, affiliate, and international memberships and to retain our loyal members. We always welcome your suggestions of what works and what does not work for you in your membership recruitment.



Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

Email: editor@avsa.org

As AVSA members face another year of cancelled local and national meetings, we can stay informed and excited about growing and showing African violets by learning all we can. The articles in this issue will help. Some of them are longer than normal, but any editor knows that it is easy to edit articles to make the text concise, but good, informative content needs to stay.

Since time at home is at a premium for most members right now, grab a cup of coffee or tea and delve into these articles. You are sure to learn something new or receive the inspiration to try a different technique, a new variety, or a first crack at design.

Online Convention

Speaking of inspiration and learning, be sure to read more about the AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration on pages 8 to 11, including a preliminary show schedule. Attending online is not the same as being there in person, but here are some advantages and reasons to attend:

- It's easy to get there. Just log on from a computer, tablet or phone.
- You can enjoy a presentation or peruse new introductions in your purple PJs on your own schedule.
- You save on travel costs (leaving more money to buy violets; watch for commercial member links from the convention site).
- Exhibiting by photo still involves grooming and prepping your plants or designs, but you don't have to worry about packing and transporting them. Plus, this is a low-pressure way to share your favorite groomed plants.
- Taking photos helps you share your successes and record your plants for your own enjoyment. Get photo tips on page 26.

Even with the benefits of participating virtually, I know everyone looks forward to in-person sales rooms and show rooms, social activities, and meeting friends — new and longstanding. Let's all hope that by 2022, AVSA members can meet in person in Little Rock.

New Website

And while you've got time to read and learn, be sure to visit our updated website (www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org). The team has done an excellent job of aggregating content from the old site into a user-friendly, attractive and updated website. You can search *AVM* past articles and photos and download your digital issue from the Magazine page (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/magazine). Select the Learn button along the top menu to link to the magazine page, or scroll down on a page to "Magazine" in the bottom menu. You'll also find updated FAQs by category if you have quick cultural questions, along with local club information, and more.

Spend a little time browsing the site and watch for more information on the Cyber Diamond Celebration and other important happenings.

Announcements

On page 49, you'll see an announcement for the job of *AVM* editor. I have decided to retire July 1, after three years on this job, which I have thoroughly enjoyed. I wanted to give the search committee plenty of time to find a qualified editor and ease the transition to ensure members continue to receive a quality, on-time magazine. Until (and after) July 1, I hope readers will keep contributing excellent articles and photos to share in the magazine.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Carnival Confetti

Exhibited by: Paul Sorano

Hybridized by: D. Lamphere/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses

2nd Best New Cultivar — Commercial, 2015

Standard



My First Violets: Grooming Your African Violets

By Sandra Skalski Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Email: sskalski@comcast.net

Regular grooming is one of the best ways to keep your African violets healthy. Healthy plants bloom more frequently and are more attractive. Your violets need your attention as much as they need water, light and fertilizer. Spend a few minutes a week on grooming and watch your plants respond.

Look Closely at Your Plants

Watering time is a perfect opportunity to observe your plants and do a little grooming. First, make a thorough inspection. How do the plants look? If you grow in natural light, your plants might lean toward the window. Turn them a quarter turn once a week for more even growth. Plants grown under artificial lights also benefit from turning.

Next, look for signs of pests or disease. If blossoms have dusty centers from spilled pollen, you might have thrips. Look for slender insects around the anthers. Leaves or blossoms that look like they've been dusted with flour can indicate powdery mildew. Are the leaves turgid or limp? If the plant seems limp, check to see if the soil is dry. A limp plant in wet soil can be a sign of crown rot. Take quick action for the best chance to remedy any problems you spot.

Remove Dying Plant Material

When inspecting your African violets, go ahead and remove any dead or dying leaves and blossoms. Decaying tissue invites disease. Any yellowed or damaged outer leaves need to go as well. Beginners tend to be reluctant to remove leaves. But bigger isn't better. Rows of old, outer leaves distract from the plant's beauty and only suck energy from the rest of the plant. Snap these older leaves off at the center stem. Make a plan to repot any plants with necks or those that haven't been repotted in 6 months or more.

Rows of old, outer
leaves ... suck energy
from the rest of the
plant.

Check whether your plant is blooming. Most African violets bloom readily, but expect a rest period now and then, especially during the winter months. Insufficient light or fertilizer are the top two reasons for a lack of blooms. Move your plant into better light and consider your fertilizer routine. We will take a closer look at fertilizers in the next beginner column.

Check for Suckers

Finally, check for suckers. A sucker is a baby plant growing in the axils of the main plant (axils are the parts where a main stem splits and forms side branches). Don't confuse a peduncle (bloom stem) with a sucker. Some peduncles have large sepals, which are leaves that protect the buds as they emerge. A sucker has four leaves and no sign of a bud. It's easy to remove a sucker while it is small. A pick or a sharp tweezer will work.

Don't be tempted to leave the sucker in place. Suckers distort the plant and eventually could cause two sides of the plant to head in opposite directions. (see Photo 1). Of course, if you are growing a trailing African violet, you want suckers to grow and they don't need to be removed.

What if you've let suckers grow and have a mess like the plant in Photo 1? With a bit of surgery, you can

remove a large sucker. Use a sharp tool or knife tip to cut it away from the main stem. You might need to break off a few leaves for suckers closer to the crown of the plant (see Photo 2). That's why it is so important to remove them while they are small.



Photo 1. Multiple suckers have distorted this plant's shape.



Photo 2. The same plant as in the first photo, with two suckers removed

You can root the sucker in a 2-ounce cup in a sealed plastic bag. The main plant pictured in the first photo needs to be repotted to get rid of its neck. Cut off the bottom of the root ball, lower it into the pot, and fill in with potting mix. Now you have two extra plants to grow or share with others after potting them and sealing them in the bag (see Photo 3).



Photo 3. The original plant repotted after cutting the neck down and two new plants from its suckers.

That wasn't hard, was it? You don't need to spend a lot of time on your plants, but consistent care is important. Regular grooming yields happy violets that will reward you with blooms. Happy growing!

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

**Available in the
AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20**

Cyber Diamond Celebration

By Mary Corondan, Show Chair

It is so exciting that AVSA is having another online show and convention. The dates will be May 30 through June 6, 2021. Please join in the fun and fellowship.

Last year, there were 351 exhibits in the Virtual Violets Show. The challenge is to have at least 500 this year in the Cyber Diamond Celebration Show. After all, what have we had to do this entire year except stay home, stay safe, and pamper our plants? Remember your disbudding schedule and start grooming those lovely varieties for a glorious photo shoot. One advantage of submitting photos is that you can capture your plants when they are at their peak performance without being dependent on an exact show date.

Enter Designs

The design division could use some additional entries since there were only a handful last year. This is a callout to all designers to brush off those designing tools and get creative again. The design themes are "75th Anniversary Celebration" and "Diamonds Are Forever." What a great way to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of AVSA!

Schedule and Photos

A preliminary show schedule appears on page 10. It is extremely easy to use due to a minimum number of classes. Read the article beginning on page 26 of this issue for tips on taking great photos of your plants and designs. There will be articles in the May/June issue of *AVM* about how to get your photos from your phone to your computer to enter them.

Remember your
disbudding schedule
and start grooming ...

Join the Celebration

It is such a thrill to see gorgeous plants that are grown all around the world in one online event. Very rarely are exhibits from many countries seen in a live AVSA show. Last year's Virtual Violet Show made it all possible, so let's continue that trend with the Cyber Diamond Celebration Show.

Violets unite us globally!



AVSA Virtual Convention

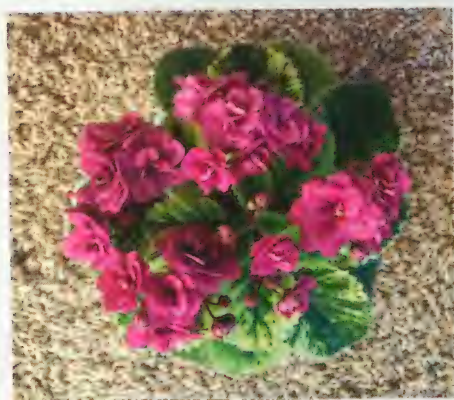
2020: Exhibits

Get your plants and designs ready to enter in the 2021 Online Convention (Cyber Diamond Celebration,

May 30 to June 6). Here are some of last year's entries for a little inspiration.



L to R: Morgan's Declan Duff, mini, exhibited by Ryan Ferre; Gleeful Elf, mini, exhibited by John deSaavedra; Rob's Boolaroo, semimini trailer, exhibited by Minh Bui.



NK-Klubnichi-Kapekeik, standard, exhibited by Carol Semrau; AB-Ozemaya Feya, standard, exhibited by Olga Bondarchuk-Huque; Sport of Rhapsodie Michiko, exhibited by Mark Romansky.



L to R: *Streptocarpus* 'Bristol's SallyMander', exhibited by Sharon McRae; *Episcia* 'Jim's Canadian Sunset', exhibited by Joanne Schrimsher; *Petrocosmea* 'Cavalierei', exhibited by Jennifer Vincent.

AVSA 2021 Show Schedule: Cyber Diamond Celebration 75th Anniversary Of AVSA

■ Horticulture Division

Class 1. Standard Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Green Foliage

Class 2. Standard Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Variegated Foliage

Class 3. Semiminiature Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Green Foliage

Class 4. Semiminiature Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Variegated Foliage

Class 5. Miniature Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Any Foliage Type

Class 6. Trailing Plants, Any Color Blossoms, Any Foliage Type, Any Size

Class 7. Species

Class 8. All Episcias, Fibrous Rooted (in bloom or grown for ornamental qualities other than bloom)

Class 9. All Other Fibrous Rooted Gesneriads (in bloom or grown for ornamental qualities other than bloom) including *Aeschynanthus*, *Codonanthe*, *Columnea*, *Nematanthus*, *Petrocosmea*, *Primulina*, and *Streptocarpus*

Class 10. Tuberous Gesneriads (in bloom or grown for ornamental qualities other than bloom) including *Chrysothemis*, *Nautilocalyx*, and *Sinningia*

Class 11. Rhizomatous Gesneriads (in bloom or grown for ornamental qualities other than bloom) including *Achimenes*, *Kohleria*, *Smithiantha*, and intergeneric hybrids

■ Design Division

• SECTION 1: INTERPRETIVE PLANT ARRANGEMENTS

Designs using one or more African violet plants (with or without bloom). Fresh-cut, dried, treated, or colored plant material plus man-made material (other than artificial plant material) may be used. Accessories are optional. Designs may be shown in niches or on an open table.

Class 12. **"75th Anniversary Celebration"**

• SECTION 2: INTERPRETIVE FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS

Designs using fresh-cut African violet blossoms, foliage, and other plant material. Dried, treated, or colored plant material plus man-made material (other than artificial plant material) may be used. Accessories are optional. Designs will be shown in niches or on an open table.

Class 13. **"Diamonds Are Forever"** The design consists of an underwater design or any other type of interpretive flower arrangement.

• SECTION 3: CONTAINER GARDENS

Miniature gardens with one or more blooming African violets and other growing plants. All plants should be planted in the container and no cut material is permitted. Accessories are permitted. Designs will be displayed on open tables. **Containers are not to exceed 24 inches in any direction.**

Class 14. **Container Gardens** The design can be any type of container garden, including a dish garden, natural garden, or a terrarium.

■ Special Exhibits Division

• SECTION 4: AVSA INFORMATION

Class 15. AVSA information by invitation only.

■ Cyber Show Rules

• ENTRIES

1. Only AVSA members in good standing and registered at this convention are eligible to enter exhibits. If you would like to join, go to africanviolet.societyofamerica.org and click on the "Join AVSA" link.

2. Entries will be accepted online from Thursday, May 6, until midnight on Friday, May 28, and shall be submitted online at the 2021 AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration website at <https://africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/cyber/>. Online entries will require:

Exhibit name (plant or design), exhibitor name, AVSA membership number, local affiliate name, home state/province, email address, and cell phone number. The exhibitor's email address, cell phone number, and AVSA membership number will not be published and will be used only by the classification committee should questions arise.

3. Exhibitors will be limited to five (5) total entries.

4. One photo of each exhibit shall be submitted. Each photo file name must be named the same as the plant name or design class (ex: "Amethyst.jpg" or "DiamondsareForever.jpg"). Photos of horticulture exhibits must be of the entire plant viewed from the side or from above and must show both foliage and blossoms unless it is a gesneriad shown for ornamental qualities other than bloom. Photos of designs should be taken from the front and should capture the design in its entirety. Show photos will be viewable on the 2021 AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration website on Thursday, June 3, 2021.

5. Questions may be directed to the Virtual Show Committee at 2021ShowQs@avsa.org.

• HORTICULTURE

6. Only clean, healthy plants which have been in the possession of the exhibitor for at least three months will be accepted.

7. Exhibitors may enter only one plant of each named variety in a class.

8. All African violet exhibits in the Horticulture Division must be in bloom.

9. All African violet exhibits, except species and trailers, must be single crown plants.

10. All African violets species, cultivars, and other gesneriads shall be correctly named; or they will be subject to correction by the Classification Committee. Entries will be verified by the Classification committee; and if they do not conform to the description, the exhibitor will be notified, and the entry will not be posted. However, all cultivar names need not be listed in AVSA publications.

11. Commercial members may enter any class.

12. Gesneriads, other than African violets, in Classes 8–10 may be exhibited in open or closed environments.

• DESIGN RULES

13. Only one entry per exhibitor is permitted in each class.

14. All entries must be the creation of the exhibitor.

15. Use of the American flag or flags of any nation, artificial plant material, live creatures and plants on the State Conservation list are prohibited.

16. African violets must be used in all classes but need not be grown by the exhibitor.

17. African violet plants used in Interpretive Plant Arrangements **do not** have to be in bloom.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1

- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Please send articles for the *AVM* to the editor (editor@avsa.org).



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Fuddy Duddy

Exhibited by: Barb Lafashia
 Hybridized by: R. Robinson
 Best Semiminiature
 African Violet, 2018
 Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Cajun's Blueprint

Exhibited by: Belinda Thibodeaux
 Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux
 Best New Cultivar —
 Amateur, 2019
 Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Demer's Pixie Belle

Exhibited by: William Price

Hybridized by: N. Demers

2nd Best African Violet in Show, Best Trailer, 2018

Miniature trailer (CA)



Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ Wesley Carter — Portland, OR

Wesley's Father Kent

- 11298 11/04/2020 • W. Carter
- Single white sticktite frilled wasp/random pale green edge.
- Variegated medium green, cream and pink, ruffled, serrated/bustle back. • Semiminiature.

Wesley's Hoodoo Priestess

- 11299 11/04/2020 • W. Carter
- Single white sticktite wasp/pink blush.
- Medium green, pointed/bustle back.
- Miniature.

Wesley's Samwise Salutations

- 11300 11/04/2020 • W. Carter
- Single white sticktite wasp.
- Dark green, pointed/bustle back. • Miniature.

Wesley's Vampyr Concertina

- 11301 11/04/2020 • W. Carter
- Single pink and fuchsia sticktite wasp.
- Dark green, plain/bustle back. • Miniature.

Wesley's Xriss Xross

- 11302 11/04/2020 • W. Carter
- Single white sticktite pansy/fuchsia patches.
- Medium-dark green, wavy. • Semiminiature.

Anne & Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received November 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 Total: \$736

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ Geneva — \$100-\$499

Julie B. Goss

Lone Star African Violet Council

In memory of Barbara Kelly

Lone Star African Violet Council

In memory of Hortense Pittman

■ Multicolor — \$50-\$99

Albuquerque African Violet Council

Vivian Bickley

In memory of Amelia Alonzo

■ Two-tone — \$25-\$49

Lone Star African Violet Council

Two-tone (Continued)

Ruth Mengsol

In memory of Shirley Degner

Quad Cities African Violet Society

■ Thumbprint — Under \$25

JoAnne D'Angelo

Barbara Greenawalt

Thelma Heinrich

Renee Juillard

Lindsay Leonidas

Gail Podany

Coming Events

Spring African violet shows and sales still might be cancelled because of the COVID-19 virus. This list represents those shows still scheduled on our website as of February 1, 2021. Be sure to check the AVSA website Events page (www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook, or contact the organizers below for the latest information.

■ March 6-7 — Texas

Spring Branch African Violet Club
42nd Annual Spring Show and Sale
Judson Robinson Jr. Community Center
2020 Hermann Dr.
Houston, TX
Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. (sale); 1-5 p.m. (show)
Sunday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m. (show and sale)
Vickie Crider: vcriders2@outlook.com

■ March 12-13 — Texas

First African Violet Society of Denton
Spring Show and Sale
First Presbyterian Church
Erwin Hall
114 W. University Drive

Denton, TX
Friday: 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Anne Nicholas: txran70@outlook.com

■ March 13 — Arizona

Copper State African Violet Club Show and Sale
Women's Club of Mesa
200 North Macdonald
Mesa, AZ
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Candace Baldwin: copperstateavc@gmail.com

■ May 8 — Nevada

Glitter Gulch African Violet Growers Show and Sale
Nevada Garden Club Center
800 Twin Lakes Drive
Las Vegas, NV
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Richard Craft: ggavg_lv@gmail.com

■ May 30-June 6 — Online

AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration
Show and educational sessions
Participate online
Mary Corondan, Show Chair: secondvp@avsa.org

May 30, 2021 • June 6, 2021

Celebrating 75 Years

African Violet Society of America

Cyber Diamond Celebration

2021
75
YEARS



1946 - 2021

75th Anniversary: Hybridizing Those Best Varieties

By Carolee Carter, AVSA Publications Chair

Email: caroleeviolets@gmail.com

In the November-December issue of *African Violet Magazine*, you saw Trudy Brekel's Best Varieties List and Honor Roll of Violets List for 2020. It started me thinking about how that list has evolved since the 50th anniversary of AVSA and the role the hybridizers have played in these varieties. I thought it would be a good time to shed some light on the wonderful world of hybridizers during the past 25 years. And boy, have they been busy!

A Revealing List

I spent some time constructing a spreadsheet of every hybridizer during that period, listing the number of varieties they have submitted to our First Class program each year, and it was quite revealing. Since 1996, approximately 3,345 varieties have been added to the list of 19,297 registered varieties in total.

When I look at AVSA's list of varieties that have received the most awards over the past several years (which Susan Anderson publishes in her Tally Time annual report) as well as those listed in the Best Varieties list, I find that the varieties on those lists are mostly from hybridizers here in the United States. Plus, there are many yearly repetitions — and rightly so, I might add. That's why they're the best!

However, I wondered why I was not seeing any of the Russian or Chinese varieties appearing on the lists, since those seem to be creating a lot of excitement in our African violet world and wind up as entries to our "Most Wanted" lists. E. Lebetskaia's LE-Karusel' was the only one in 2020, and E. Korshunova's EK-Goluboglazaia Rossiia (Blue-eyed Russian) appeared in 2019. Hopefully, they will continue to remain on the list for a 5-year total to make it to the AVSA Honor Roll.

There are about 804
Russian/Ukrainian
African violet hybrids
registered now.

International Hybridizing

In trying to get a handle on this, I re-read *AVM* articles from Joyce Stork (May-June 2010) and Sue Hoffmann (September-October 2012) about the development of the Russian African Violet Community and how Vladimir and Tatiana Kalgin created such a surge in starting clubs and encouraging members to hybridize.

It seems that the most prolific of the Russian/Ukrainian hybridizers began registering in 2006, followed by another surge in 2010, and it continues to this year. There are about 804 Russian/Ukrainian African violet hybrids registered now. Dr. Jeff Smith wrote about the burst of these varieties in the November-December 2018 issue of *AVM*, focusing on different methods they are using.

And then there's Hong Kong hybridizer, Stan Ko, who has been registering varieties since 2004 with a total now of 97. When he posts photos on Facebook, everyone wants a leaf! And, speaking of Facebook, groups like African Violet Buddies, African Violet Enthusiasts, Russian and Ukrainian African Violets, African Violet Nerds and AVSA manage to whet our appetites with stunning photos of new national and international varieties. We also are being treated to photos that *AVM* publishes from award-winning

growers like Wayne Geeslin, Kurt Jablonski, Debbie McInnis and Sandra Skalski. *AVM* has also been publishing photos of unique international varieties.



Rhapsodie Patricia. Hybridized by Holtkamp in 1995. Exhibited by Linda Sumski, 2019. Photo by Richard Craft.

So, why, then, aren't we seeing any of these varieties pop up on the Best Varieties list?

Not only that, but the Honor Roll (for which a variety must appear on the Best Varieties list 5 years) is pretty slim between 1997 and 2019.

Honor Roll

It is amazing how many more plants were added to the Honor Roll in the 1960s. In 1961, there were 21 plants that made it, which was the largest number in the years that I had available to check. The next best year was 1980, with 18 plants making the list.

The hybridizer who had the most plants in the Honor Roll in the 1960s was Eyerdom. The interesting thing was that in the 1960s, plants from Eyerdom were listed under the plant name and some had the Granger Gardens' name ahead of the plant's name. Then, in 1975, plants from Eyerdom were listed as Granger's and then the name of the plant. No wonder people get confused by plant names!

Lyndon Lyon registered lots of plants through the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. They had the same issue with registered name changes, but rightly so since there were several family members involved in

their hybridizing processes. It started in the 1960s with the hybridizer being L. Lyon. It then changed to S. Sorano and finally changed again to L. Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano. In 1969, there were nine plants on the honor roll, and eight of those plants were hybridized by L. Lyon.

Your window to vote
for your favorites
is open.

Holtkamp had several plants that made the honor roll in 1974 to 1975, with the Rhapsodie series, and, of course, the Optimara series beginning in 1987. There are many other hybridizers who had plants that made the honor roll in the early years: F. Tinari, E. Champion, M. Maas, J. Smith, I. Fredette, J. Swift, R. Nadeau, B. Sisk and H. Pittman, to name a few.

Hybridizers in the 1990s to date who had Honor Roll plants were S. Williams, W. Smith, B. Johnson, K. Stork, R. Robinson, R. Bann, R. Wasmund, P. Tracey, M. Tremblay, D. Ness, J. Stahl, J. Brownlie, T. Weber, P. Hancock, D. Rollins and R. Kurzynski. There were 6 years since 1990 in which there were no additions to the honor roll and 9 years in which only one plant was added. That is really sad, and we need lots of members to step up to the plate and vote for your Best Variety!

Vote Now

Your window to vote for your favorites is open. Go to our the AVSA website (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org) and click on "Best Variety Voting." That will take you to a link for either an online or mail submission form that is due by June 30. Let's see what happens when both the 2021 AVSA's Best Varieties List and the Honor Roll of African Violets List appear in our November-December 2021 issue!

Contest Entry —

Growing Healthy African Violets — The Root of the Issue

By Terri Vicenzi Bloomington, Indiana

As an experienced grower of African violets, *Streptocarpus* and other gesneriads, I have had the typical ups and downs that come with caring for a large plant collection. However, in the past couple of years, I have had a persistent problem of root rot with my African violets. The problem manifests itself in the mature outer leaves becoming slightly yellow, followed by the formation of a dark, soft spot where the petiole attaches to the leaf blade. Shortly thereafter, the entire leaf turns dark brown.

The roots on my violets are plentiful, but their tan-to-brown coloration is another sign that all is not well. The plants otherwise appear healthy and bloom regularly, but after several months of this behavior, the plants eventually perish. This is clearly a slow and insidious case of root rot, but what was I doing wrong? I wick water, repot at least two to three times a year, and I use good sanitary practices during repotting and cleaning. I have tried everything — several different (and expensive) chemical fungicides, modifications in the amount of perlite in the soil mix, alternate wicking techniques, and more frequent repotting. Even with the tried-and-true crown resuscitation method championed by Joyce Stork, my restored plants would begin to succumb to the ravages of rot several months later.

Help from a Friend

On a day that I tossed out dozens of plants in utter despair, I sought advice from an experienced violet friend. We systematically discussed every aspect of my culture. One of the suggestions he made was to check the pH of my tap water. I had not done this in

the past, as I thought pH issues were most likely attributed to overdue repotting. I used some pH test strips to check out the situation. First off, the pH of my tap water was 6.5, a little low, but I deemed this acceptable. Freshly prepared fertilizer solution was slightly lower, with a pH of 6 to 6.5. However, the pH of reservoirs that had fertilizer water in them for a few months was much lower, at 4.5 to 5. Yikes! (See photo 1).

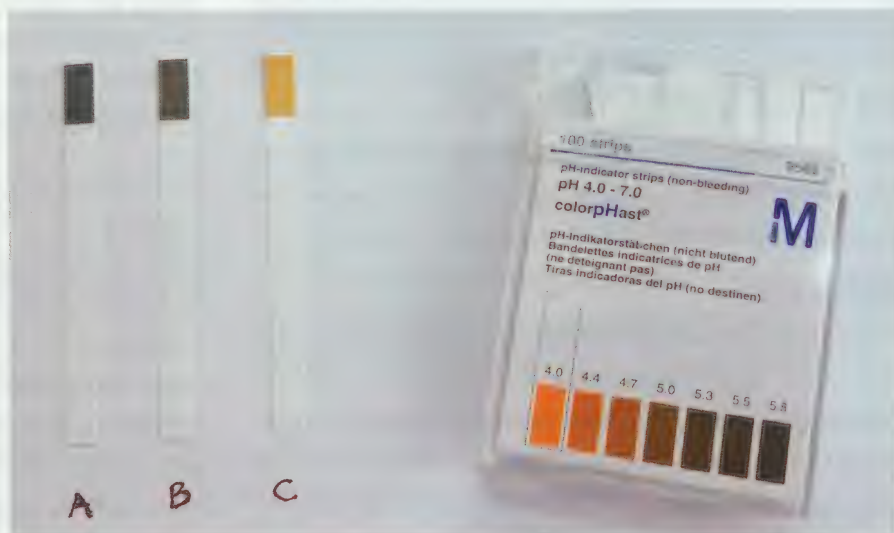


Photo 1. My pH test strip comparison. The A strip measured tap water; B, fertilizer water; and C, aged (reservoir) fertilizer water.

It's important to remember that pH measurements are logarithmic, so a change in pH from 7 to 5 is 100 times more acidic. It made me start to think about the fact that when I wick water, I top off the reservoirs when they are half empty, and I rarely dump out (or clean) them. I have hundreds of plants, and I must admit that having a big collection has made me a little lazy. So, it seemed quite possible that the pH of the reservoirs was drifting lower over time, most likely due to the breakdown of the peat and/or the slowly increasing concentration of fertilizer salts in the wicking solution. This might explain the observation that root rot only began to show up with plants I had been growing for several months.

Signs of pH Problems

In my investigation, I learned that another subtle sign of a pH problem is the color of the underside of the foliage. Many of my violets' leaves exhibited an uneven purple coloration on the back side of the leaves, which isn't normal, with the noted exception of red-reverse varieties. After consulting Doctor Optimara, I learned that low pH in the soil will inhibit the absorption of many nutrients, including phosphorus. Phosphorus also is an essential element for healthy root production.

This was the first significant "aha moment" I have had in quite some time. So, I have modified my practices to change out the reservoir fluid monthly. I also am adding a pH-buffering solution to increase the initial pH of the fertilizer water to 7.

It has been 6 months now, and I have noted with delight that I now have plump white roots being produced on plants that previously had dark roots (see photo 2). Young, newly wicked plants are growing better and I'm removing fewer unhealthy leaves. It's still too early to tell if this is the silver bullet, since cultural issues are generally a combination of factors. But it definitely feels like a big step forward in the right direction. Most importantly, thanks to the help and expertise of my friend, I am throwing out a lot less plants.



Photo 2. Roots on a wicked violet, 2 months after pH adjustment and cultural changes. Note the white roots emerging against the older dark ones.

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from November 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020 Total: \$80

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

■ **Multicolor — \$50-\$99**

Kathy Bell, Tucson, AZ

■ **Thumbprint — Under \$25**

Thelma Heinrich, Scottsdale, AZ

Renee Juillard, San Antonio, TX

Thumbprint (Continued)

Lindsay Leonidas, Naperville, IL

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN



In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306
Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

African violets do not always express their genes consistently. One of the best examples of this is how flower color can alter based on the temperature of the growing environment. When plants are grown “cool,” colors usually are more intense compared to when the same plants are grown “warm.” One example is the cultivar Frosted Whisper, which usually has very white flowers and almost white stamens under warm growing conditions. When grown cool, this cultivar will develop areas of light pink, with the color intensifying the cooler the growing temperature.

Temperature is relative, and it is not clear whether the daytime temperature is more important or if the nighttime temperature matters more. Plants that are grown on windowsills are more likely to show responses to temperature over the growing season with flower colors more intense during the winter and diluted or pale during the summer. Watch your plants this spring and see how they change as the weather warms.

The effect of temperature on flowers is a common question on Facebook groups. Plants with the thumbprint trait show much larger areas of white on the petal edges when grown warm and can be solid color when grown cool. The differences often are striking and new growers often wonder if the plant has sported.

The changes in the amount of pigment are not the results of a mutation or a sport but are a genetic response to environmental cues. Temperature has affected the amount of pigment being produced, either by changing the amount of the enzymes made for pigment product, or perhaps in the ability of the enzymes to function. The total amount of pigment changes, but the plant’s DNA remains unchanged. Therefore, this is not a mutation or sport.

Plants that are grown on windowsills are more likely to show responses to temperature.

Recently, I was asked if fantasy flowers also change their numbers of dots and dashes of color under different temperatures. A quick survey of growers on Facebook was inconclusive. Some growers recalled seeing changes in fantasy pattern under different growing temperatures and others were not so sure. I would hypothesize that some fantasy flowers respond to changes in temperature, with different amounts of fantasy dots and dashes, but a close study would be needed to document the differences. Watch your plants as they bloom this winter and into spring and summer and see what changes you notice in the blooms.

Q: Can flowers with the reverse fantasy pattern of white dots and dashes on a dark background sport to the same pattern but on a lighter color background?

A: Yes, I have seen a sport of Rainbow’s Quiet Riot where the background color had sported from blue to pink. The plant still had the reverse fantasy marks of white dots/dashes. The contrast in colors was not as noticeable against the lighter pink background, but the reverse fantasy pattern still was there.

There are not many hybrids with the reverse fantasy pattern. I would think that a sport of the back-

ground color from blue to red and/or pink certainly is possible. You might have to look through hundreds of offspring to find a sport. However, one clue might be to look for plants that have lost the red backing on the foliage that is common to many of the reverse fantasy cultivars. A mutation that takes out the red leaf backing trait is much more likely to result in a lighter background color in the flowers. If you notice paler leaves in some of the babies from leaf cuttings of reverse fantasy plants, these might reward you with a sport of reverse fantasy on a pink background.

Q: Is it possible to develop a white flower with a raspberry edge?

A: In my experience, the raspberry edge trait always has been linked to a pink/red color in the flower. I would anticipate that you might get a raspberry edge on a very pale pink or red flower, but I don't know that it would be a true white. I think there would have to be some pigment in the petals to get the raspberry edge trait to express. The flower might appear to be "white," but I think that testing would show it to be a very pale pink.

Q: Some of the literature I've been reading uses the term "hybridizer" for plants and the term "breeder" for animals. Is there a difference between the two terms? Don't both refer to a person who works with the genetics of the organism?

A: Yes, "hybridizer" and "breeder" are really the same terms. One might be used more commonly in the plant community and the other more commonly in the animal community, but both essentially mean the same thing.

Q: What is the difference between birthmarks and a leaf chimera?

A: Birthmarks are usually random patterns of dark or light areas in the foliage. The placement of the marks varies from leaf to leaf. The amount of marking also varies from leaf to leaf. Leaf chimeras, in contrast, have consistent amounts of dark or light areas in the leaf. The pattern is consistently replicated in each leaf, such as a border of lighter green or white areas on the leaf margin of each and every leaf.

Birthmarks are usually random patterns of dark or light areas in the foliage.

Neither birthmarks nor leaf chimeras will reproduce true to type from leaf cuttings. The baby plants will not be true to type with the parent leaf. Leaf chimeras, however, can be reproduced true to type from suckers, similar to the way flower chimeras are reproduced. The "consistency" in pattern from leaf to leaf and from leaf to plantlet reproduced by suckers are the defining characteristics of a good leaf chimera.

Q: Since African violets are in the same genus with other *Streptocarpus*, shouldn't it be possible to cross the two plants together?

A: A year or two ago, I would have said that the two groups could not cross. Several studies had been done involving thousands of crosses and all had failed.

More recently, I have seen reports of reputed hybrids between the two. At least one of these looked to be intermediate in foliage between the parents, but the plant had not yet flowered and the documentation of the cross was not as strong as it could be. I would need some stronger evidence before accepting the claim of a hybrid between African violets and streps, but I'm open to the idea that it could happen.



Family Portrait: *Episcia* 'Jim's Specialty'

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, Ohio

Email: melsgrice@gmail.com

Episcia 'Jim's Specialty' is an example of one of my favorite gesneriads. This outstanding variety was hybridized by the late Jim Bodner from Canada. I love the vivid pink color and the dots in the yellow throat of the blossom. The dark green leaves have a contrasting lighter green pattern in the center veins that make the plant quite interesting even when not in bloom.

About *Episcia*

Episcia (ep ISH a; ep ISS ee a) is a New World genus of the gesneriad family that comes to us from Mexico to Brazil and everywhere in between. The name comes from the Greek word *epi*, meaning "on" or "upon;" and *skia*, which means "shadow," in reference to the shady habitat where the plants are usually found in nature. These fibrous-rooted gesneriads are terrestrial growing with creeping stems that root at nodes, branching by the regular production of stolons, or runners. Between its strawberry-plant-like ability to spread by stolons and its typical growth

on the litter of the forest floor, it easily earns one of its common names — carpet plant.

Episcias come from warm areas of the world and demand warmth.

Episcias come from warm areas of the world and demand warmth. They will be damaged or killed if the temperature falls below 55 degrees. I have discovered that they are difficult to take to African violet club meetings in the winter months in Ohio. They quickly developed blackened areas on the leaves even though they were enclosed in Styrofoam boxes when taken from a warm car into a heated building.

Just a few seconds of very cold air damaged the foliage.

Episcia Culture

Extra humidity seems to encourage blooms. Many people grow *episcias* in enclosed terrariums or under clear plastic domes. I have noticed that they also seem to grow faster if they are enclosed, which more closely mimics their natural habitat. My house is kept at 70 degrees all year long with either heat or air conditioning. There are many plants in the room, which helps to increase the humidity. I do grow and bloom many *episcias* uncovered, but they



Episcia 'Jim's Specialty' pink blooms and contrasting green foliage.

receive constant moisture from wick watering. Perfect drainage is essential since they grow naturally on the forest floor in the litter found there. Adding extra perlite to the potting soil and placing a layer of perlite on the bottom of the pot are helpful.

Episcias often are grown in hanging baskets because of the numerous stolons they typically produce. Warning: any plant grown hanging has more air circulating around it and will tend to dry out more quickly. Remember, episcias like constant moisture, so growers have to be vigilant with the watering can if they choose to grow them this way.

Episcias have very shallow, fibrous roots, and often are grown in wide pan pots or even large saucers that are only an inch or two deep. Propagation is easy with all the stolons a plant produces. You can pin (like with an upside-down U- shaped wire) a stolon to the soil surface and roots will develop quickly from the leaf nodes. Or you can fill a pan pot with potting soil and insert several stolons around the pot, with the number of stolons depending on the size of the pot. Keep the number of stolons down to avoid the pot quickly becoming too crowded. Place the pot in a large plastic bag or under a clear dome

and the stolons will root in a few weeks. Gradually expose them to less humid room air if you plan to grow them outside of a terrarium-like atmosphere.

Any plant grown
hanging ... will tend to
dry out more quickly.

Some growers treat episcias more like their saintpaulia cousins and grow them as a single-crowned plant for show. They remove all of the new stolons as the plant grows, leaving only the main crown. The remaining leaves usually grow much larger than normal. Growers disbud the blooms until before a show like we do for African violets and are rewarded with a mass of blooms when the plants are allowed to flower.

You will be rewarded if you try growing *Episcia* 'Jim's Specialty' or any of the other numerous Jim Bodner hybrids with the alpha name "Jim's."

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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Episicia*
'Cleopatra'**

Exhibited by: Robbie McMeel
Best in Class, 2017



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Petrocosmea*
'Short'nin' Bread'**

AVSA 75th Anniversary
Exhibited by: Linda Hall



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Columnea* 'Firebird'**

Exhibited by: Paul Sorano,
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
Best Other Gesneriad —
Commercial, 2017



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Primulina* *dryas latifolia

Exhibited by: Richard Nicholas
2nd Best Other Gesneriad, 2016

Pro Tips for Violet Photography

By Richard Craft Las Vegas, Nevada

Last year, when our annual national convention was canceled due to the pandemic, a team of volunteers banded together and created the 2020 AVSA Virtual Violets Convention website. Among the most popular sections were the New Introductions Gallery and the African violet, design, and gesneriad exhibits. All those photos were submitted by you, members of AVSA, and so many others around the world.

Shortly following the news that this year's 75th Anniversary convention in Atlanta was canceled, AVSA announced that we would have another online convention, the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention beginning on May 30.

This means that we will once again be asking you to submit your photos so that the world can see the beautiful plants you are growing. To help you take great pictures of your African violets, gesneriads and designs, I've asked a panel of experienced photographers to share their advice — Stephen Covolo-Hudson, Tom Glembocki, Winston Goretsky, Mel Grice and Dale Martens (see bios on page 30).



Photo 1. 2009 Reno Convention, Best Robinson Collection: Rob's Lucky Stroke, Rob's Strobe Light, and Rob's Fuddy Duddy. Photo by Tom Glembocki.

We will once again be asking you to submit your photos ...

You'll discover that each photographer has a preferred camera setup. Whether it's an older model smartphone or the latest mirrorless digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera, Stephen reminds us that, "It's the user, not the camera type or model, that takes a great capture. So, use what you know, but the details matter in photography of your plants."

Tom adds, "For web use almost all modern-day cameras are great. Some of the smartphones even take pictures as good as a DSLR of several years ago. Specifically, phones such as the Samsung Galaxy 20 or the Google Pixel series have been judged the best you can get in cellphone cameras." I'll throw in my pick for the best camera phone based on top reviews: Apple iPhone 12 Pro Max. Whichever brand you prefer, today's smartphone cameras are an excellent choice to quickly upload high-quality photos to the internet.

Work Space

While candid shots of your plants on a coffee table or a windowsill are fine, it is much better to stage your plants in an uncluttered area to avoid detracting from the central focus of the photo — your beautifully grown plant.

When you are entering a plant in a show, you take several steps to prepare the plant. Be sure the leaves are free of debris; check the leaves for any damage and consider rotating the plant so that the best side

is facing the camera lens; carefully arrange the blossoms for maximum visual impact. Once you have prepared your plant, stage it in your shooting area. “Pay attention to the background. It makes or breaks a great photo,” says Stephen. (See photos 2 and 3.)



Photos 2 and 3. Background makes a difference, as seen in these photos of *Streptocarpus* ‘UA-Mavaka’. Note the distracting background on the plant stand (top) and some post-production work to eliminate the background (bottom). Photos by Stephen Covolo.

Mel adds, “A light gray background makes all plants and flower arrangements pop. I absolutely hate black backgrounds. They suck all of the life out of the plant/flowers. Take the time to stage your plant with no distracting backgrounds (no wrinkles in cloth or prints on fabric).” In contrast, however, Dale normally uses a dark background.



Photo 4. Jay Sespico taking a photo of *Nematanthus* ‘Black Gold’ at the Ohio State AVS show in 2018. Two OTT (craft) lights — one on either side of the plant — can be adjusted, and no flash is necessary. Photo 5. Gray cloth clipped to a large piece of cardboard makes for an easy photo background. *Nematanthus* ‘Black Gold’ with gray background. Photos by Mel Grice.

I purchased wrinkle-resistant cloth backgrounds in several colors for my home studio. My preferred colors are royal blue and powder blue.

According to Winston, “Try to create a ‘space’ or niche in which to photograph your subject material. This will help to eliminate distracting backgrounds, provide a neutral or complementary color behind the subject, and allow you to properly light the ‘scene’ in order to acquire a good image. You can drape a towel over the back of a chair and set it in a bright, natural light location in your home,” he says.

Lighting

Once you have an area set aside to stage your plants, the available lighting becomes an important factor. Tom says, “Use good lighting. If you have good light coming from a window that is not direct sunlight, the blossoms will take on more of a three-dimensional effect.” Winston agrees, adding, “Avoid direct sunlight, as this creates harsh shadows.”

See Winston’s lighting setup in photo 6. He is using a pair of umbrella softboxes positioned to either side of the focal area. Like Winston, I use a pair of umbrella softboxes in my home studio. However, on the road, I use portable, rechargeable LEDs, which are dimmable.



Photo 6. Winston’s niche using umbrella softboxes for lighting. Photo by Winston Goretsky.

To Flash or Not To Flash

Most high-end flashes have settings to control the intensity of the flash with through-the-lens (TTL) metering, meaning that the camera and flash communicate with each other. In automatic mode, the flash sensor measures the light output. The measurement of the flash output is independent of the camera light meter.

Pay attention to the background. It makes or breaks a great photo.

However, using the built-in flash or an external flash on the hot shoe is very limiting because the flash goes straight at your subject. In general, if you’re not familiar with adjusting settings on your camera and flash, Stephen recommends: “Don’t use a flash. It washes out the plants and overexposes the photo. Photograph in bright indirect light and pay attention to your white balance for the truest color renditions.”

Dale is one who knows how to properly set up and configure a flash. “I use ... a Nikon ring-flash attachment (see photo 7), but also set up a small LED desk lamp to highlight leaves and flowers to give the photo a more three-dimensional look.” (See photos 8 and 9.)

Personally, I rarely use flash. My DSLR and camera phone have excellent low-light sensors that give me great photos in less-than-ideal light conditions.



Photo 7. The ring flash has its own batteries and screws on the lens. Dale turns it on and the LED lights enable her to get within an inch of the flower for close-up photos. Photo by Dale Martens.



Photo 8. The base of this *Streptocarpella* is translucent with maroon dots. Dale highlighted the plant's base with an LED flashlight, then the entire plant with the camera's flash. In Photoshop, she could easily blacken out the flashlight, or just close in from the sides to eliminate the flashlight. Photo 9. *Streptocarpus* 'Dale's Baby Bluebirds' in a 2.5-inch pot. The goal was to highlight all the flowers without overexposing any. Dale used the camera's flash, but also pointed the LED desk lamp's light to come from the upper left side and point downward. Photos by Dale Martens.

Camera Settings

Your plant is ready to go. How about your camera? What are some considerations you should be making about your camera equipment?

Stephen says, "Quit using automatic mode and practice with manual mode on your camera; start telling the camera what you want it to do. There are a multitude of videos on the internet on how to shoot in manual mode. Today's smartphones even have options/settings to take captures in manual mode."

Winston adds, "Set your camera to shoot in RAW mode and use software later to crop and save your images. RAW mode captures all the image information and allows for adjustments, whereas JPG compression eliminates information and produces a final version. Your original RAW image should be thought of as the master and the cropped and saved image should be your final. Save in PNG format to preserve more image information in the file."

Note that the PNG format is best for pictures being displayed on the web, and does not work for AVM. Export photos to high-resolution JPG or TIF if photos will be published in a print publication.

Winston suggests how to ensure a photo works in print or online. "Photograph at the highest resolution possible. Print material requires 300 dpi to look good, whereas digital media only needs 72 dpi. Downsampling an image for the internet is possible

from a high-resolution image, but creating a print quality image from low resolution does not produce the desired results.

"I like to use a 50 mm macro lens ("Micro" in the Nikon world), which gives me a 1:1 image ratio. This is important because size of the subject is projected onto the sensor at the exact same size it is in real life," says Winston.

At the 2019 Houston Convention, the overhead lighting cast a greenish hue in the showroom and sales-room, resulting in many casual pictures having that awful green

tone. To overcome this, we used a setting in our cameras called white balance. Basically, the camera adjusts by adding the opposite color to bring the color temperature back to neutral. Most, if not all, DSLRs have a setting for automatic white balance (AWB) or users can set it manually.

Many high-end cameras on phones have white balance settings. These might come in a preset form such as incandescent, tungsten, fluorescent, flash, daylight, shade or cloudy, or they might use the kelvin (K) value for color temperature correction. You might be able to download an app if your phone doesn't support these functions.

Focus

"Focus is critical," says Dale. "Turn off any fans and hold your breath when you press the shutter button so the photo stays in focus. Use a tripod if your photos tend to be out of focus." She also uses the macro setting on her camera for great closeups.

Winston explains in detail, "In order to achieve a sharp focus, I typically like to set my camera aperture between f/8 and f/10. The shutter speed should be set greater than 1/60th of a second to prevent blurring from "camera shake" when not using a tripod. I use the 'aperture priority' setting on my camera so I don't have to worry about this."

Dale gives us one more helpful hint. "I am a hybridizer, so I want my photos to be in sharp focus and the

truest color I can get. I often take a live flower and hold it up to the computer screen and adjust with Photoshop to correct the computer's color," she says.

I hope these tips will help you to become a better photographer of African violets, gesneriads and design projects. The bar was set last year when we

had a great number of quality photos submitted. What will this year bring?

Check the website (africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org) often for updated details on how and when to submit photos of your plants and designs.

Photographers' Bios

Stephen Covolo-Hudson

Stephen has traveled the world with a desire to have great memories of frameable quality. Mostly self-taught, he read many books, watched lots of videos, and took one-on-one classes. "The real key is practice, practice, and more practice. The best part with the digital format is your mistakes can be deleted. It was a natural segue to combine my love of hybridizing, growing, and showing African violets and *Streptocarpus*."

"My preferred camera body is a Canon 5D, but I capture quality photos using my smartphone with the manual mode found on the camera settings, shooting in RAW."

Tom Glembocki

Tom has an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering. Among many skills, he was trained in portrait photography by the late Monte Zucker and Tom even had his own photo studio. He has been photographing the AVSA Convention for the AVSA Library Committee for 20 years. His current camera of choice is the Sony Alpha a6400 with Sony 18-135mm f/3.5-5.6 OSS lens.

Mel Grice

Mel is an avid photographer who takes photos of all plants at local and national shows. He is the editor of *Gleanings*, a monthly newsletter for The Gesneriad Society. His photos appear in *Gleanings* as well as the *African Violet Magazine*.

Mel uses the camera on his iPhone 7, which "is light-years better than my expensive DSLR camera with fancy lens attachments. Newer iPhone models have even better depth of field features built in."

Winston J. Goretsky

"I've always enjoyed photographing, as a young child who started with a manual film camera,

through the advancements of color film technology and the eventual digital era of today. I've always had an appreciation of capturing nature — especially plants and flowers — in a format that allows others to see them through my eyes. Whatever way you have — or choose — to photograph, make sure you're having fun, and that you see the final image in your mind, as you would like to share it with others. Practice your skill, and good luck with your images."

Winston is currently using the Nikon D3X with a 60mm Micro lens and a Leica Q mirrorless full frame.

Dale Martens

Dale is on The Gesneriad Society's convention photography team. She is a renowned hybridizer of African violets and many gesneriads. "The Gesneriad Society has show entry classes for photography entries and I've won my share of ribbons. I often enter a macro-photo of flowers."

Dale's main camera is a point-and-shoot Nikon CoolPix 4500 with no additional lens attachments.

Richard Craft

I began working with the AVSA Library Committee at the 2017 Orlando Convention, taking photos of the showroom plants. The photos appear on the AVSA website. I am currently using a Sony a7 III. Lenses used most often are the Sony FE 24-70 f/2.8 GM lens and the Sony FE 50mm f/2.8 macro lens.

AVSA Social Media Streams

AVSA's new website has a page featuring a compilation of all our social media sites (Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.) You'll find many user-submitted photos at: www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/look/avsa-social-media-streams/



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Cajun's Fair Maiden

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis

Hybridized by: B. Thibodeaux

Best African Violet in Show, Best Standard, 2018
Standard

Annual Appeal

African
Violet
Society of
America

BOOSTER

There's never been a better time to be a Booster

Beginning with our 75th anniversary year AVSA is embarking on a plan to help support the society to ensure continued growth, modernization, and stability to see our way to a very successful path to 100 years!

All members, new and old, will benefit from a strong society. Each year AVSA will undertake an annual appeal for donations to help support the various expenses we have that are not financed through the collection of dues. These expenses are entirely dependent on the generosity of donations from members, non-members, Affiliates and Councils, and Vendors. If you desire a modern and successful society we need and appreciate your support!

The very first annual appeal target is named "THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO BE A BOOSTER"!!! At present, the Booster Donations help AVSA maintain various programs & services, despite the current pandemic challenges. These donations help solidify the stability of your society. Planning for the future also helps us avoid the need for emergency fund raising. We are planning for a strong future.



For more information, contact
Randy G. Deutsch, AVSA Fundraising Chair
fundadvancement@avsa.org



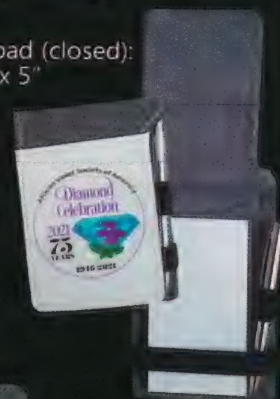
The goal is to raise \$20,000. This annual appeal will run from March 1st until April 15, 2021. During this time only, donors may qualify to receive a premium gift! These gifts were developed to commemorate AVSA's 75th Anniversary. You will definitely want one of these to remember this special year, and this is the only way you can get one. Here are the giving levels:

- **\$40 donation** receives a card holder (for credit card, driver's license, etc.) which attaches to the back of a cell phone, customized with 75th Anniversary logo.
- **\$100 donation** receives a notepad with pen, customized with 75th Anniversary logo.
- **\$250 donation** receives a trifold portfolio customized with 75th Anniversary logo.
- **\$500 donation** receives all three or a wireless portable charger, customized with 75th Anniversary logo.



Card holder:
2.5" x 3.5"

Notepad (closed):
3.25" x 5"



Trifold portfolio
(closed): 7.25" x 9.5"



Wireless portable
charger: 3" x 6"



So hurry, join the fun, and get your choice of premium gifts in return.

All gifts will be mailed out approximately May 1st.

Visit the website for a downloadable Donation Form, or donations can be made through our website, just click on "Donate."

www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org

There's never been a better time to be a

BOOSTER



A Look at Birthmarking

By Amy Cash-Allison Somonauk, Illinois

Birthmarking develops randomly on African violets due to a plant's genetic instability, and it can be a source of frustration since it is often a precursor to a sported plant that does not fit the description, and thus, can't be exhibited in shows. In my case, birthmarking also leads to curiosity. I had a baby plant of Kentucky Berry Bush that I grew from a leaf, and it showed birthmarking (light areas) from a young age (see Photo 1).



Photo 1 (top) shows birthmarking in young Kentucky Berry Bush. Photo 2 shows bloom stalk changes as plant matures.

The description for this cultivar is: Kentucky Berry Bush (D. Rollins) Double medium pink star/variable green edge. Dark green, serrated/red back. Semiminature.

Notable Differences

This particular plant, as you can see from the photo, didn't really have dark green leaves. Mostly, they were medium green with a normal back and some birthmarking in dark green (with corresponding red reverse birthmarking.) But birthmarking often portends a sport in the flower colors, so I always watch with interest to see what will happen when the plant finally blooms.

As the plant came into bud, I noticed a slight difference in the bloom stalks as they emerged from the foliage. The peduncles and pedicels had some variation in colors. Most of them were a light reddish color, but some were noticeably lighter and lacked the reddish hue. In one particular case, there were two of these "opposites" on a single bloom stalk.

In Photo 2, you can see my sweet dog's beautiful white fur, and the differences in the peduncles on a single pedicel as shown by the arrow. It also shows that the tiny sepals behind the buds are different colors. The bloom stalk on the bottom is light greenish white, whereas the upper left stalk is showing more color. The arrow shows the "divided" bloom stalk made up of both colors.

As the flowers began to open, it was clear that there were differences in these blooms, as shown in Photos 3 and 4. In Photo 3, I've again highlighted, with a hand-drawn arrow, the odd bloom stalk that produced both types of flowers. The lighter green stalks produced whiter flowers that showed barely any blush in the eyes and a faint tinge of green edge. And although the timing of these two photos is deceiving

due to the age of the blooms, the whiter flowers actually were a smidge smaller than the pinker ones.



Photo 3 (top) Arrow points to bloom stalk producing two “opposites” on one stalk. Photo 4 shows color differences in blooms.

Labeling it a Sport

It was interesting to watch these flowers develop, but this is now considered a sport — a random mutation, labeled only as ‘Semiminiature No-ID’. While pretty, and fascinating in its uniqueness, it does not match the description for either possible cultivar.

The pink blooms look identical to Kentucky Gooseberries, so it is possible my leaf was mislabeled. However, we can never make those kinds of assumptions.

Birthmarking can make a plain-foliage plant look interesting, and it’s often asked if this type of marking will propagate if you put down a leaf. In my experience, the answer is sometimes yes, but usually no.

I’ve found that the birthmarking trait *can* be passed down in a plant, but that doesn’t mean that the markings will reproduce themselves in the same pattern or density again. For that matter, the babies could come up perfectly normal at first and then show signs of birthmarking later. Still, it is an interesting phenomenon to observe with violets, and taking a close look at early stages can be very telling if you’re impatient like I am.

Contest Entry —

The Plight of My Abandoned Violets

Marge Farrand Ann Arbor, Michigan

Several years ago, after retirement, my husband, Bill, and I decided that the winters in Michigan were getting to be a bit much for us and the warmth and sunshine of Florida called our names. We are fortunate because our family had inherited a condo in Sarasota from Bill's parents when they passed away, and we made the decision to spend most of the winter — November to April — there in warmer weather. There was one big stumbling block, however ... what to do with my collection of more than 200 violets for the 6 months or so that we would be gone.

My first inclination was to pack them all up and take them with me! I really enjoy early mornings fussing over my plants with coffee in hand. Whatever would I do for those couple of hours each morning if I didn't have my plants to tend to? My husband quickly put an end to that plan after pointing out that we would barely have enough room in the car for all we needed to take, let alone a multitude of boxes filled with violets. Then I sadly thought that perhaps my time of caring for my large collection and participating in our local sales and local and national shows might be coming to an end, because my plants would never live through a winter with little care.

Coming Up with a Plan

That was just too sad for me to consider, so I began to eye my neighbors more closely. Did one of them have an inclination for houseplants and gardening? Would they be willing to come in and mix the fertilizer water and fill all the reservoirs on a weekly basis? Would they be willing to water the mats and adjust the plants as they grew and leaned toward the light? How about removing all the buds and blossoms as soon as they appeared? Could I impose on them that much and trust that they wouldn't miss a week? I've got the most wonderful neighbors in the world, but I just couldn't bring myself to rope them into all that

responsibility when they knew little to nothing about growing violets. I was getting desperate.

I still have to prepare
my plants for my long
absence.

Then, Bill and I talked about the wonderful young woman who cleans our home throughout the summer. We needed someone to stop by regularly and check the house during the cold Michigan winter. Debbie would be great for that and it would also provide her some income throughout the winter when she wouldn't be doing the housekeeping. I knew and trusted her and she had always shown an interest in the violets, even taking home a few that I had given her to enjoy.

Luckily, she agreed, and has been a blessing to us ever since. She even will send pictures occasionally to show how the plants have grown and will inquire about any that don't seem to be doing well. As our house checker, she's always willing to do what it takes and to keep a vigilant eye out on the rest of the house as well. Problem solved!

Preparing the Plants

Despite Debbie's help, I still have to prepare my plants for my long absence, which is a major effort. I repot each plant that has not been repotted recently, take it down to just a few leaves and remove all blossoms. The rest are groomed down to a few leaves as well. This creates the room on my shelves for the plants to grow over the winter. Many of these plants will develop suckers because of disbudding and all

will grow essentially untouched all winter. I also leave some of my starter plants that are just too small to repot in their 3-ounce Solo cups over the winter. They are beyond ready to pot up by the time I return! I even put down leaves to propagate and bloom stalks to do their thing in my absence. Both do well without my impatient urge to swoop down and tear them apart even before they are quite ready.



Photo 4. A shelf on my stand ready for my departure, with all plants taken down.

Returning Home

As you can imagine, after an absence of 6 months with no grooming or transplanting, my growing area is a jungle when I return at the beginning of May. Many plants have suckers and most are overflowing their pots. I ask Debbie to quit disbudding about 4 weeks before my return, so I am also met with the beginning of a beautiful display of color and can soon see which plants are blooming true. It takes hours and hours of work, but shelf by shelf, they return to their gorgeous blooming and groomed selves.



Photo 5. The same Ko's Green Dragonfly when I returned in early May.

Photos 1-3. Ko's Green Dragonfly ready to prepare for its long, lonely winter. From top to bottom: before repotting, after being taken down and repotted, and all the leftovers.



Photo 6. Ko's Green Dragonfly after I had taken it down and repotted it a few days later. I got a nice, healthy new plant from that large sucker.

It is such a joy to see them all beautiful and happy again. If I am lucky, I will have a few good enough to take to shows, maybe even a national one, but that is one of my biggest disappointments with my current schedule. Having said that, I feel so fortunate and grateful to have the chance to enjoy our warm winters and still keep my African violet collection.

I cannot grow the show plants that I used to be able to grow. They just cannot receive the grooming and transplanting they should have to make a large and beautiful plant. But I take a handful anyway, just because it's fun to participate and I keep my fingers crossed that they eke out a few blue ribbons to keep my judging credentials intact.

Booster Donations

By Dianna Walston Kokomo, Indiana

Donations received from November 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020 Total: \$800

Booster Donations support AVSA ongoing general expenses.

■ Geneva — \$100-\$499

Desert Sun AVS, Glendale, AZ

In memory of deceased members in 2019 and 2020

Lorrane P. Hifer, North Royalton, OH

Sylvia Singh, Tiburon, CA

■ Multicolor — \$50-\$99

Christine Asuega, Chicago, IL

In memory of Gloria Arquette

Kathy Bell, Tucson, AZ

Christy Stevens, Bradford, VT

Linda Sumski, St. Louis, MO

■ Two-tone — \$25-\$49

Albuquerque AVC, Albuquerque, NM

Desert Sun AVS, Glendale, AZ

In memory of Gloria Arquette

■ Thumbprint — Under \$25

Debra C. Black, DeLand, FL

Thelma Heinrich, Scottsdale, AZ

Renee Juillard, San Antonio, TX

JoAnn Levine, Billings, MT

Mary E. March, Minneola, FL

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN

Sandra Sanders, Lebanon, OH

Wilma J. Wolverton, Grain Valley, MO

Senior Judges: Important Notice

By Barbara Werness

Phone: 763-754-3918 Email: seniorjudges@avsa.org

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2021. Please refer any questions regarding the Senior Judge examination to Barbara Werness.

The examination request form can be obtained on the AVSA web site in the Shows and Judges section under Member Content. The form includes instructions for the \$5 fee payment. Proof of three blue ribbons as per the AVSA Handbook, 2016 edition, page 83, should be sent with the form. (Proof of three blue ribbons is waived for the 2021 examination.)

You may receive the examination by email as a Microsoft Word document. If not received, follow up within 2 weeks. If you require a hard copy by postal mail, allow up to 3 weeks for delivery. Please specify whether you want the exam by email or as a hard copy.

A printed hard copy (not email) of the exam must be returned to Barbara Werness by October 1, 2021, for grading.

Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination

can use the same request form; but also need to send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook, Page 85: This information is to be sent via postal mail to: Barbara Werness, 12354 Naples Street NE, Blaine, MN 55449.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient.)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per AVSA Handbook, 2016 Edition, Page 83.

(Proof of three blue ribbons is waived and only three signed schedules are required for the 2021 examination.)

Apply by September 1, 2021. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2021, will be returned and application may be made next year.

Please include email address and you will be notified when your exam is received. No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2021.

Correction

On page 7 of the January/February 2021 issue of *AVM*, a photo of Senk's Anemone was credited incorrectly. The photo was taken by Richard Craft.

Unique foliage of Senk's Anemone, exhibited by Sam Cunningham and hybridized by D. Senk/R. Follett.
Photo by Richard Craft.





Shows and Judges Committee

By Mary J. Corondan, Chair

Email: judges@avsa.org

The new AVSA website is such a credit to the African Violet Society of America, and especially to those who created it. It is both gorgeous to behold and highly functional. Kudos to the dedicated individuals who made this possible: Candace Baldwin, Tom Glembocki, Joyce Stork, Richard Craft, Winston Goretsky and Amy Carruth.

Navigating the New Shows and Judges Page

If you are familiar with the previous website, you should find the new website easy to navigate. Here's how:

1. Sign in as a member on the www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org website.
2. To get to the Shows and Judges page, you can click on "Participate" in the upper right-hand corner. When the dropdown menu appears, click on Member (Only) Content. The other option is to click on "Member Content" at the bottom of the home page.
3. Click on the "Leaders" icon.
4. There will be a box that states, "See Shows and Judges Page." Click on that box.
5. Next, you will see icons for "Shows," "Judges," and "Judging Schools."

A. Shows: Find Rules and Procedures for an AVSA Standard Show here. Under this tab you can register a show and pay for an SSA Packet. You also can submit your Affiliate Show Awards Report for "Tally Time" and the "And the Winners Are..." column. There is a box to click to contact the Schedule Approver and Shows & Judges directly.

B. Judges: When you click on this tab, you will find information on qualifications and general rules for judges, as well as the categories of judges and requirements to achieve each level. The application for the Senior Judges Exam is here, as is a payment button to go with the application. You can purchase

the *Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges* as a printed version or PDF download. Updates for the 2016 Handbook have been compiled in a PDF version for your convenience and printing.

C. Judging Schools: The Rules for Judging Schools and General Rules and Requirements for AVSA Teachers are located under the Judging Schools. A Judging School can be registered here by an affiliate. You can apply to be a teacher and there is an "AVSA Teaching Tools" guide that contains resources for AVSA Judging School Teachers.

Senior judges should
continue to take your
senior exam on
schedule.

Approved Show Schedules from 2020

If an affiliate had an AVSA show schedule approved in 2020 and did not have a show, that show schedule can be used in 2021 or 2022. Please notify Susan Anderson at scheduleapprover@avsa.org should your affiliate plan to do this.

Reminder About Expiration of Judging Certificates

As was previously stated in this column, all student and advanced judging certificates will **not** expire from 2020 until further notice. Expiration dates have been extended indefinitely. When shows and judging schools begin to occur again, you will be notified of the expiration date of your certificate in this column.

For those of you taking your first senior judge's exam, schedules from only **three** (rather than five) AVSA-approved (affiliate or convention) shows signed by the show or judge's chair will be required to qualify for the examination during the pandemic. Proof of three blue ribbons will be waived until further notice.

Senior judges should continue to take your senior exam on schedule. Proof of three blue ribbons will be waived until you are notified otherwise. If you continue to take the senior judge's exam when due and score at least 93 points, your certificate will not expire during the pandemic. Remember that Master Judges may request a senior judge's exam free of charge from the senior judge examiner. This makes for a great refresher course. The senior judge examiner will send you the answer key after October 1 so you can compare answers. Merely send a request to seniorjudges@avsa.org for your copy.

Handbook Revision

The revision of the **Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges** is running behind schedule. Please continue to use the current handbook with the updates listed in the Shows and Judges column and on the website.

Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021

The 2020 Virtual Violets Convention was very well done and was well received by the membership. It is exciting that 2021 will see the undertaking of another online convention. This is an opportunity to display and enjoy violets, gesneriads and designs from around the globe for international viewership.

Plans are to have the Judges' Breakfast during convention week. This will be a live video meeting with a question-and-answer session. Everyone is invited to sip their hot coffee or tea as we address questions regarding shows and judging. Please submit your questions by May 1, 2021, to judges@avsa.org. The success of this activity is dependent on your input.

Make it a part of your plans to exhibit and attend the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention online. After all, it is the 75th Anniversary of the African Violet Society of America. Let's celebrate in style as violets continue to connect us, even during the pandemic.

Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Contest Entry —

Having Fun with Design

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

Email: kdco5@ptd.net

I really enjoy entering designs and most of the time I have a lot of fun doing them. I hope that this article will help you to also get enjoyment from creating them. Before I get to the fun part, I would like to go over how designs are judged. Although creating flower and plant arrangements is a form of art, there are certain rules and guidelines that exhibitors should follow.

Scale of Points

The scale of points is the same for both interpretive flower and plant arrangements; points are:

Design	40 points
Interpretation of schedule	15 points
Distinction and originality	15 points
Suitability of materials	10 points
Relationship of materials	10 points
Condition of materials	10 points

Design

As you can see, design earns the most points and is the most important part of the arrangement. The principles of design are those that you can feel (balance, contrast, dominance, proportion, rhythm and scale) and the elements are those you see (color, form, line, pattern, space and texture). Some might think that the smaller a design, the easier it is to do because it requires less materials. But the smaller the design, the more important proportion and scale are.

In a miniature design, the sizes of the accessories, container, blossom, and leaves on plant material matter. The size of the line material used also is critical. You don't want any of those to overpower the space or ruin the design's balance. There are different types of designs — crescent, fan, horizontal, oval, S-shaped, triangular, vertical and zigzag. The type of design you choose can help with the interpretation.

Carefully sprayed
flowers last a long
time.

Interpretation of Schedule

I like to use color, texture and the line of the design to help with the interpretation instead of using an accessory. A friend and wonderful designer, Jan Murasko, used grape stems after removing the fruits from them to represent jacks, and they looked just like a pile of them. Instead of using mouse ears or a little Mickey Mouse statue for a title of Mickey Mouse, why not use black line material in a curve to mimic the curve of the ears?

The color of the backdrop can enhance the interpretation. Color use is important in your interpretation; you wouldn't want to use dark colors for a happy theme or light colors for a sad or dreary theme. Black and white designs are tricky, because often, a white blossom is not easy to find, but why not paint a blossom black or white with spray paint? Depending on the show schedule, you also might remove the anthers (pollen sacs). I use regular spray paint (instead of floral) since it is cheaper and works just as well with a bit of practice. Regardless of the spray paint you use, hold it away from the flower and spray a bit at a time to avoid damaging the flower.

Carefully sprayed flowers last a long time. I really enjoy entering underwater arrangements and have quite a collection of containers. I pick a container based on how its size and shape will support a design that best interprets the class title. For example, if the

title has to do with flowing water, I like to use a long container to create a horizontal design. I use a shell, rock or leaves to cover the pin holder; I find that using rocks or marbles to cover the pin holder can detract from the design.

Distinction and Originality

The longer you enter or judge designs, the less distinction and originality you might see. It is my opinion that some design rules in place limit how distinct or original a designer can be. I entered a suspended design for an arrangement in which the class description didn't require a suspended design. I later heard judges ask if that was allowed because the class description didn't say the design should be suspended. When judges look at a design that is distinct and original, they should be remarking primarily about how clever the designer was. As judges, we should be looking for the positive first, and not the negative.

Fortunately, there are more designers who are thinking outside the box and doing different types of designs, which are starting to be accepted. A design has one anchor point, so whether it is on the table, hanging from a dowel, or off the back of the niche, it is acceptable. A designer shouldn't be penalized because a judge has never seen a design done in an unusual manner, as long as it is in accordance with the show schedule.

Suitability of Materials

Everything used in the design should be suitable for the title or feeling of the design. For example, would you use a piece of an evergreen if the title had a desert theme, or dark colors and heavy line material for a childlike theme?

Relationship of Materials

Unless you are entering an abstract design, all the components used in a design should relate to one another. They shouldn't fight against each other unless that is part of the interpretation. A design titled "All Shook Up" that I did for a gesneriad show was created as an abstract design. I find abstract designs hard to accomplish because we are so trained to have a focal point, and abstract designs should not have one. I knew that I had accomplished my goal when I saw a comment on the score sheet saying that the lines were "too disturbing."

Everything used in the design should be suitable for the title or feeling of the design.

Condition of Materials

Although a plant used in a design doesn't have to be culturally perfect, it should be clean and free of pests and disease. Plant material and flowers should look fresh. Backdrops should not be wrinkled (unless intentional to add to the design) or stained. Mechanics, those materials used to hold the design together, shouldn't be seen; if they are seen, they should blend into the design.

Show Schedule

The schedule is the law of the show and exhibitors must read it thoroughly to make sure that an exhibit they enter follows it. When I look at a design schedule for the first time, I choose those classes that jump out and pique my interest. I send my request to the design registrar as early as possible to guarantee I get into the classes I desire. I've found that the original idea I get from reading a class title usually is the best one I have, and I will lose it if I overanalyze it.

Design descriptions that are kept brief give me more opportunities to be creative. Lengthy descriptions that almost tell you how to complete the design and all it should or should not include tend to limit the designer's creativity. Having too much in a class description also can get a designer penalized for choosing not to incorporate something mentioned in the description unless, of course, it is required. As I put a design together, I reread the show schedule to make sure that I'm following it. A flower arrangement I entered at a state convention had a title to do with winter. I planned to use an icy blue flower in the design, but thankfully, one of the other designers pointed out that we were to use white flowers only. The design wouldn't have been judged because it didn't conform to the schedule. I've seen someone enter a plant arrangement in the flower arrangement

class or vice versa. Some shows assign someone to look over the design section to make sure that all the designs comply with the schedule.

Stress

Anyone who has entered a design has gotten totally stressed out, especially at show time, of course. The key is to do as much as possible ahead of time to eliminate some show-time stress. With less stress, the more fun and enjoyment you will experience. I'm usually doing other jobs at a show, so having the bulk of my designs done saves a lot of time and stress. I create the design at home when I'm relaxed, usually a week prior to the show. I've mulled the class titles I've chosen around in my head, glancing at the show schedule and sometimes drawing a few pictures and making notes on the schedule.

My husband also has hobbies, so at times, we have our projects spread around the living room, so we support each other. It is helpful to keep a relaxing atmosphere and if possible, work on designs in an area that doesn't require complete cleanup when finished for the day. I also try to have a list of the blossoms and plant material I need to finish the design and usually bring a selection with me. Nothing is worse than being unable to find the blossom or blooming plant that you need for your design.

Design Box

I have a plastic storage box that contains all my basic supplies — glue gun, glue sticks, tools, a tape measure, small cans of spray paint, florist wire and tape, masking tape and florist Stickum (green and white), a variety of pin holders, a variety of cap tops to hold blossoms and plant material, plus more. Having it all in one place means that I will more than likely have whatever I need at the show, which reduces stress, and I can just pull out that box when I'm working on my designs at home to avoid searching for those items.

If I'm traveling to a show via plane, I have a small tackle box in which I put the essentials; the box fits in my checked luggage. Most designers are happy to help if you have forgotten something, but it is always easier to use familiar tools. I think the most important tool that I have is my trusty glue gun; I would be lost without it.

The Fun Part

I have a collection of niches that I've either made or received from friends that match or are marked up with the sizes of most of the shows. A wonderful designer and teacher, Edward Bradford, gave me his, which are made out of wood with hinged sides so they fold up (see Photo 1). You also can make them out of cardboard or foam board. Using a correct-sized niche helps ensure that the design will fit in the niches at the show. If it is a freestanding design, you need to keep measuring the design as you assemble to ensure that it doesn't exceed the limits designated in the schedule.



Photo 1. A wooden hinged niche to fit most show schedule sizes.

Those of us who have been in design for some time have a collection of line material, stands (such as candleholders), containers (I have a collection of miniature vases), and cloth and paper backdrops (see photos 2 through 5). I have them organized in several boxes that live in my attic and I bring them down near show time so I can easily “shop” among them. It is easy to fall into doing a standard design



Photo 2. Collection of small stands for designs.



Photo 3 (left). Embroidery hoops and metal rings for suspended or curved designs. Photo 4. I collect natural materials and purchase line material. My husband works with metal so I shop in his scrap bin for pieces I can use. The flat white piece in the foreground is one of these. Photo 5. I love to use the seed pods from locust trees, milkweed and teasel. Weighted cup pin holders are essential to hold and keep line material where you want it.

every time and just switching out a few things to fit the class title, but it is a lot of fun to think outside the box and use materials you haven't used before.

Plant Arrangement

Now, I will show how I put together a plant arrangement titled "Smoky Mountain Memories," a class from the 2014 Nashville Convention that was sponsored by Optimara (designers purchased a plant from them). I knew the flower on the plant was green, so I used that color to tie in the rest of the design. I used a medium green candlestand to bring the plant to about mid-niche height so the plant would appear to be floating in the mist. I used a piece of driftwood as my line material and hot-glued it to the candleholder so that it would remain in place.

White tulle (netting) would be my mist and help to hide the stand. Since I wouldn't have the plant until I got to convention, I used one of my standards to make sure that I had the wood in the right place and the height of the stand was correct. The material that I used for the backdrop was a medium green with swirling patterns that look like clouds. I have a heavy cardboard box that was used for packing bananas, and I put a layer of plastic bags on the bottom and then nestle my designs on top of them, putting other bags around to support everything so it doesn't move around during travel. My backdrop was ironed to the appropriate size for the niche and hung on a

hanger in the car so that it wouldn't wrinkle. I was going to use some Arborvitae from the garden to represent the pine trees in the Smoky Mountains, but while at a rest stop on my drive down, I noticed some pine trees that would be perfect. I didn't want to take them from the rest area so I kept an eye out and saw the trees along an exit, stopped and clipped a few (yes, I carry clippers in my design box). The needles were about 2 inches long and had small cones on them, which would be perfect.

Once I could enter the showroom to work on my designs, I brought all my supplies into the showroom. I placed backdrops into the niches, and then just placed my designs into the niches, since I had worked on them from home. I stood back to make sure that I had the angle right. I spread out newspaper, took the plant I got out of the pot, gently removed some loose soil off the root ball and then wrapped it in plastic wrap. I carefully folded up the extra soil and newspaper and threw them away. It is always important to keep the work area clean and to leave room for other designers on the worktable.

I then wrapped the root ball in a piece of the backdrop material that I already had cut. If any part of the root ball shows, the material helps it blend in with the backdrop. I placed the plant on the candleholder, stabbing the root ball with the spike on the holder and holding everything in place with either clear

fishing line or hot glue. I placed the pine branches where I wanted them, complementing the line of the wood and the plant placement, and then added the tulle. I once again stood back to make sure that nothing reached past the dimensions of the niche and that no mechanics were showing. See Photo 6 for the finished product.



Photo 6. "Smoky Mountain Memories" final display for the 2003 national convention.

Flower Arrangement

I basically follow the same steps for flower arrangements that I use for plant arrangements. I want my flowers and any plant material that I use to remain fresh, so I hot glue the plastic caps in place that will hold their water source. A friend has given me caps from syringes, but you can cut straws and put hot glue in one end to close it off. A weighted pin cup holder (see Photo 5) secures line material and can also be filled with water to keep plant material fresh. Exhibitors can also hot glue larger plastic holders in place as water reservoirs for plant material that is placed higher in the design.

I use fake flowers to help practice the proper placement of the caps

so I don't have to mess with placement at the show. I paint the caps a color that helps them blend in with the design and backdrop so that they won't be that visible. Judges deduct points for any mechanics that show in a design. For underwater arrangements, I use distilled water, and I like to use grapevine for my line material and I know that it won't bleed out into the water. If you are using any plant, line, rock, or shell that you haven't used before, put it in water for at least 24 hours to make sure that it won't bleed, which can discolor and ruin the water arrangement. I hot glue everything together using a pin cushion, shell or rock for the base, and florist Stickum to hold the base to the glass container. As I'm putting the design together, I keep placing it in the glass container to make sure that nothing will be touching the sides or come above the top. Remember that curved containers magnify everything and sometimes will make the design look like it is touching the glass. Because of this, almost all the containers I have are flat sided.

Photo 7 shows a horizontal underwater arrangement I was very happy with that won best in class, best flower arrangement, and might have won best in design until a judge questioned the size of the container. I was so focused on using that container, I did not check the length, which was 14 inches; the show schedule indicated the maximum size was 12 inches. So, my 2 seconds of excitement were dashed away when the arrangement was eliminated from consideration because it didn't meet the schedule requirements. That's another reason to check and double-check the show schedule.



Photo 7. Well-received horizontal underwater arrangement with the wrong size of container for the show schedule.

Outside the Box

Have fun with your designs, try new things and stretch the limits. Thinking outside the box might get you those full 15 points for distinction and originality. Why not do a suspended design when it isn't called for (see Photo 8), or have your underwater design attached to the back of the glass, as Vickie Crider cleverly did at the Buffalo convention (see photos 9a, 9b, and 10).

I hope that this article will give you some ideas to make your life a bit easier when creating designs and help you to have more fun. I create for my own enjoyment and if the judges like it, that is icing on the cake. Watch the next issue for some more ideas on thinking outside the box in design.



Photo 8 (left). Suspended design. Photos 9a and 9b. Vickie Crider's clever underwater design attached to the back of the glass (2018 Buffalo convention). Photo 10. "Thomas Edison" plant arrangement; other designers used lightbulbs, but I based my design on another Edison invention — the motion picture camera.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from September 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020 Total: \$275

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

■ **Geneva — \$100-\$499**

Desert Sun AVS, Glendale, AZ

In memory of deceased members in 2019 and 2020

■ **Two-tone — \$25-\$49**

Albuquerque AVC, Albuquerque, NM

Desert Sun AVS, Glendale, AZ

In memory of Gloria Arquette

Missouri Valley AVC, Kansas City, MO

■ **Thumbprint — Under \$25**

Thelma Heinrich, Scottsdale, AZ

Renee Juillard, San Antonio, TX

Lindsay Leonidas, Naperville, IL

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN

Michelle Warner, Vernon Rockville, CT

In Memory

Mary Boland

This past year has brought loss to many. AVSA has suffered a loss too. One of our past presidents, Mary Boland, died on Dec. 23, 2020, in Alexandria, Virginia. Born in New London, Connecticut, on March 25, 1927, she married her first love, Arthur Boland, and died 6 months after Art's death. AVSA was her second love.

Mary gave so much time and effort to the world of African violets and AVSA. She was a founding member of the Old Dominion African Violet Club, the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society, the Baltimore African Violet Club, and the Potomac Judges' Council. Active in Dixie AVS, she was an AVSA Master Judge and teacher and a mentor to many. She served on the AVSA Board of Directors for many years as chairman of the Plant Registration Committee and the Master Variety Committee. She was elected president of AVSA in 1989 and received a Hall of Fame award in 1996.

Mary's daughter Ginger has thanked her African violet friends, saying, "Growing up we were all dragged to African violet shows, where I remember big rooms of tables with plants and designs. I remember spending hours and hours at Tyson Corner Shopping Mall in their convention room downstairs," she says. Ginger believes that Mary and Arthur attended more than 40 conventions over the years.

Deeply interested in parliamentary procedure, Mary belonged to the Virginia State Association for Parliamentarians and assisted AVSA in conducting Board of Directors meetings and chairing the Bylaws Committee.

After her presidency, Mary continued to serve on various committees and attended conventions along

with her husband, Art. She last attended the Cherry Hill, New Jersey, convention in 2011. Those of us who worked with Mary fondly recognized her correspondence, typed in all caps. We all will miss her, and our thoughts and prayers are with her family.

Bill Paauwe

AVSA has lost another treasure. Bill Paauwe of Long Island, New York, passed away January 4, 2021. His Sweet Water AVS club members will really miss him. He and his wife, Kathryn, were commercial vendors in the 1980s and 1990s. Bill served on the AVSA Annual Index Chair for a number of years. Kathryn was his co-chair.

Dorothy B. Whitaker

Dorothy Bissett Whitaker, "Merritt Island Dorothy" died peacefully while under hospice care at Cape Canaveral Hospital in Cocoa Beach, Florida, on November 16, at the age of 75. Dorothy will be dearly missed by her husband, James Whitaker, and her children. Dorothy loved helping others, sharing her etiquette knowledge and being crafty.

Dorothy (DoDe) was an avid gardener and an active member of the African Violet Society of America for many years, running their national conventions and competing as a grower and designer. "Green Thumb" DoDe was also a talented florist and attended Temple University where she studied Horticulture.

AFRICAN VIOLET MAGAZINE Editor

Teresa Odle, our **African Violet Magazine** editor, is retiring July 1 after three years as editor.

The AVSA Executive Committee has appointed an Editor Search Committee to begin work finding a qualified replacement. Please feel free to share this brief description of the job and to guide interested editors to our website for a complete description.

The African Violet Society of America (AVSA), a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, is seeking a detailed, professional production and content editor for its full-color, bimonthly, print publication **African Violet Magazine**. The position is part-time and reports to the AVSA First Vice President.

Job Brief

We are looking for an experienced magazine editor with a good sense of what makes an interesting angle

to a story and how to manage all phases of print and digital publication. The editor will plan, coordinate, review, and edit content; work closely with writers; work with the advertising committee to increase the number of advertisers in the *AVM*; and work with AVSA staff and leaders to publish a magazine our members will find educational and informative.

The successful candidate will have demonstrated experience in editing magazine content and a thorough understanding of standards for quality and accuracy, and of publishing principles. The goal is to provide exceptional, informative and engaging content.

More Information

The full job posting is available on the AVSA Website: www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Streptocarpus* 'Lady Slipper Blue Ice'**

AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Richard Nicholas



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***S. 5c2 clone*
diplotrichus Parker**

Exhibited by: William Price
Best Species African Violet,
3rd Best African Violet in
Show, 2015



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Streptocarpus* 'Emily'**

AVSA 75th Anniversary
Exhibited by: Elaine Niece

UV: Feared and Forgotten

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

When it comes to plant growth, much focus has been given to the portion of the visible light spectrum termed photosynthetically active radiation (PAR). PAR is found between 400 and 700 nanometers (nm). This region encompasses the blue and red lights that are necessary for photosynthesis. However, in the past two decades, research on the nonvisible range has shown that far red (700 to 750 nm range) light has tremendous benefits to plant development and flowering.

Exploring UV Light

Another part of the spectrum that rarely is discussed is ultraviolet (UV) light. UV is further divided into three types, based on wavelength and energy. The longer the wavelength, the lower the energy.

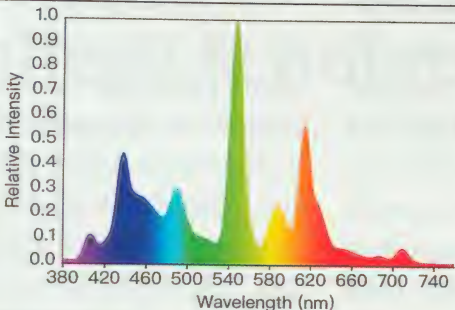
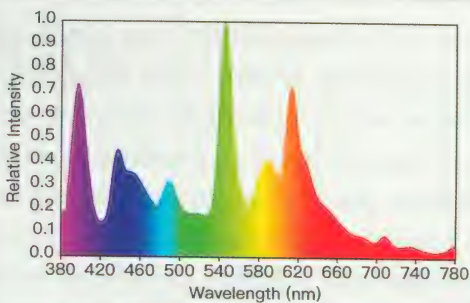
UV-A (sometimes called near UV), with the longest wavelength and lowest energy of the three, is between 315 and 400 nm. Meanwhile, UV-B falls between 280 and 315 nm. The highest energy light source is UV-C, which is between 180 and 280 nm and is capable of causing severe side effects in people, such as DNA damage and cancer.

Previous reports in the scientific literature have shown that flashes of UV-C result in a plant's ability to fight off fungal pathogens (see source 1), and exposure to UV-B light increases photosynthetic performance (source 2).

Other reports suggest that exposure to UV-A and blue light induce anthocyanin (red pigment) production in plants (source 3), and that UV-A and blue light accelerate flowering (source 4). However, growers have largely ignored this part of the spectrum either due to fear, being unaware of the research, or overemphasis on the visible/PAR region of the spectrum.



Optimara Loyalty plants on wick watering and placed under 6400K grow bulbs alone (left) and under 6400K plus ultraviolet bulbs (right). Top: August 7, 2020; middle: December 10, 2020; bottom: December 19, 2020. Note the plant on the left showing signs of root rot from lack of growth.

	6400K Bulb Alone	6400K + UV Bulb
Spectra		
CCT / CRI / Lux	5800K / 83 / 3100	4500K / 88 / 6100
Width of plant (in)	7.75	10.75
Total No. of inflorescences	4	9
Total No. of buds & blooms	21	62
Average No. of blooms per inflorescence	5.25	6.9

Graph: Spectral readings, plant width, and number of blooms on December 10, 2020.

A Lighting Experiment

Those who grow African violets with natural light already benefit from having UV in their lighting regimen, while those who grow with artificial lights have very little or lack this portion completely. In this mini-experiment, I purchased two Optimara Loyalty plants on August 1, 2020. I chose Optimara Loyalty because it was hybridized, selected, and grown under greenhouse conditions, where it is exposed to UV light daily. I immediately repotted the plants in my growing mix and placed them 6 inches apart under my 2-year-old T5H0 6400K fluorescent lights.

The plant on the right in the photos received light from an additional UV-A LED CANAGROW Universal light bulb (approximately 400 nm), turned on for 4 hours a day, and directed 6 inches from the crown. Both plants were wick watered and grown out for almost 5 months with results documented in the lower photos. I took images periodically to show-case differences. One major cultural difference is that the plant on the left in each photo failed to put on significant growth. Being that both plants are wick watered, when a plant is not actively growing and being constantly wicked, it begins to rot, so I was forced to stop wicking the plant on the left to prevent further rotting.

Meanwhile, the plant with the added UV-A light source yielded twice as many inflorescences, or blooms stalks, and three times as many blooms. Foliage growth was robust, the plant remained healthy, and wick watering posed no issues (see graph).

Another part of the spectrum that rarely is discussed is ultraviolet light.

Adding UV Light With Caution

In the past two decades, more than 6,000 research articles from the scientific community have shown that UV light can have both positive and negative effects on plants. Usage of UV in horticultural practice has only recently gained momentum in the cannabis industry. Here, I show that the addition of UV, a region of the spectrum many artificial light growers have little or a complete lack of knowledge in, can have a positive impact on African violets.

Since this mini-experiment, I have retrofitted three shelves, each with one Barrina UV LED blacklight bar with between 6400K and 3000K bulbs, and will be observing growth and flowering in the next year. A word of caution: minimize your exposure to UV light as much as possible. During the time the UV lights are on, I avoid the growing room as much as possible. If you must enter the room, use protective eyewear. If adding UV light to your setup, UV-A is sufficient, UV-B is unnecessary, and never add UV-C, since it is unsafe to use in the house on a daily basis.

Sources:

1. Aarouf, J and Urban, L. Flashes of UV-C light: an innovative method for stimulating plant defences. PLoS One. 2002.

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4. Bagnall, DJ, King, RW and Hangarter, RR. Blue-light promotion of flowering is absent in *hy4* mutant of *Arabidopsis*. Planta. 1996.



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Time To Apply for the AVSA College Scholarship

By Charles Ramser

For more than 20 years, AVSA has offered a college scholarship program for students — undergraduate and graduate — who are studying ornamental horticulture, floriculture, plant genetics, botany, or an equivalent program in an accredited college or university. The award is funded through The AVSA Boyce Edens Research Fund. Dependent upon fund availability at award time, the committee selects one, or possibly two, students annually. The award is generally offered for one academic year — two long semesters — at a time. Awardees may apply in successive years but will be in competition with new applicants.

Prior to application, students normally must have completed a minimum of 24 semester or quarter hour college credits, while maintaining at least a “B” average. Awards are based upon merit.

The application form is available online at www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org (under the Learn menu) or by requesting a copy through the AVSA office in Beaumont, Texas (P.O. Box 22417, Beaumont,

TX 77720). Applicants should submit the completed form via standard mail, along with an *official* transcript and two professor recommendations, to the Scholarship Selection Committee by March 1, 2021, for the 2021 to 2022 academic school year.

AVSA remains dedicated to, and encourages enthusiastically, the recognition and advancement of horticultural and related study at the college level.

Here is a quote from a recent recipient: *“I value everything the AVSA stands for, and I admire those who are still so passionate about floriculture. I am forever grateful for the scholarship I received last year, and I am working my hardest this year to show you that it was put to good use. I admire this organization and your support of my education.”*

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Dr. Charles Ramser
2413 Martin St.
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Cloning from Tiny Seedlings and an Update

By Ronn Nadeau website: NadeausAfricanVioletSeeds.com

In this article, I report on an experience with tiny seedlings and provide an update on a nonchimera trait in a cross. First, while preparing to transplant seedlings at 63 days after sowing, I wondered if leaves from such small seedlings could be used for cloning. So, I took three small leaves from a seedling of a cross of plants with short names AJG and SAK, planted them in a 3-inch pot, and put them under lights. At 33 days after planting, all three of the small leaves were showing second-generation sprouting plants. At 53 days after planting, the leaves and their babies were developing nicely (see photos 1 through 3).



Photos 1 and 2. Transplant seedlings 63 days after sowing (top); small leaves from AJG X SAK seedling (bottom).



Photo 3. Leaves and babies from leaves 53 days later.

Results

The experiment also included planting 63-day-old seedling leaves from three other crosses. The results for the other crosses were similar, though their times to sprouting were longer.

Soon, when the little AJG X SAK plants in the third photo are larger and greener, I will cut small leaves and plant them to make third-generation plants. If that works, the blooming plants from the second and third generations will be compared with the seedling plant to see if they are blooming true. This could be a record-fast time for testing a seedling for trueness through three generations. Whether this micro propagation method has value depends on how much time it can save, which I will be able to determine when all the results from this experiment are in and evaluated. I mainly tried it to see if it could be done.

Update

In an article I wrote for this magazine (January/February 2020, page 8), I described hybrids of mine that have a distinctive flower pattern I call “dance.” The dance trait first showed up in a seedling from the cross ROX X Optimara My Temptation (see photos 4 through 6). Upon viewing a dance blooming plant, people often comment that it must be a chimera



Photos 4 through 6: Examples of the dance trait.

because of its distinctively marked flowers. Recent results from crosses with plants possessing the dance trait confirm that it is stable through vegetative and sexual propagation, and therefore is non-chimeric.

Crosses in which only one of the parents has the trait result in a small percentage of progeny with the trait. Crosses in which both parents possess the trait are in progress. The photos on this page depict the Dance trait.

I hope to develop crosses whose seeds will produce dance plants exclusively. I also will try to transfer the trait to miniature and trailer African violets, as well as to double and stick-tight bloomers.

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Seedling Violets: Like No Other

By Bill Chaney La Pine, Oregon

I have recently seen references to seedlings that have been posted online and identified as NOIDs. That is not the case. When a violet is produced from seed, it inherits a unique set of chromosomes from each of its parents. It is not like any other plant in the world. The term NOID is used in the violet world for a plant that has lost its label, hence the term “no identification” (NOID). A true NOID is a variety that someone else raised from a seed and gave a name. If the label gets separated from the plant, we just cannot ever be sure which variety it is. There are so many varieties and many look so similar that we can never make a positive ID.

About Seedlings

A seedling is a variety that is like no other. It might be similar to its parents or to its siblings (seedlings from the same seed pod) but it is not exactly like any other plant. The person who raised the plant from a seed can name the seedling and it is now a variety. That person can produce clones by vegetative propagation and sell or give them away. If the seed is from a planned cross and both parents are named varieties, the originator can register the variety with the AVSA after proving that the variety is stable by producing plants from the original that bloom true (just like the original seedling) through three generations, each producing 90 percent or more plants that bloom true to the original seedling.

Since essentially all African violet varieties are hybrids, seeds from any of these plants — even if they are pollinated by their own pollen — cannot produce a violet that is exactly like the seed violet. Only vegetative propagation (from a leaf, suckers, or bloom stems) will produce exact copies of the mother violet. New violet varieties are created when a hybridizer transfers pollen from the blooms of a selected variety to the stigma of the bloom of a

selected parent. The resulting seeds will each produce a unique seedling that also is a unique variety. Hybridizers will discard the vast majority of the seedlings, but a select few go on to be new varieties that they propagate vegetatively for sale. Good hybridizers usually have a specific goal in mind when making a cross.



Top: Jere's Pink Elephant. Bottom, Rock Star, hybridized by Paul Sorano. Photos by Jere Trigg.

Jere Trigg Seedlings

The seedlings produced from a planned cross can be quite variable. Jere Trigg is a successful hybridizer from Alabama who has produced some beautiful standard African violets. He decided to make a cross of one of his own varieties with another variety because both have unusually large blooms and he



Five seedlings from Jere's Pink Elephant and Rock Star cross, with a wide variety of bloom characteristics.

was interested in seeing if he could further increase the bloom size by crossing these two varieties. He transferred pollen from Rock Star, a double chimera fuchsia star with a white strip hybridized by Paul Sorano of Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses, onto a bloom of his variety, Jere's Pink Elephant. Despite both parents having a lot of pink in their blossoms, there was considerable diversity in their seedlings. Jere discarded all single droppers and retained several seedlings, which are large sticktite stars.

Only vegetative propagation will produce exact copies of the mother violet

Jere is in the process of evaluating the best of these seedlings with the large blooms that he was trying to achieve, as well as blooms that are unique, on plants that have foliage that is attractive and healthy. If he finds that some of these seedlings are candidates for introduction, he will need to propagate the variety from leaves, bloom stalks or suckers for three additional generations to show that the variety is stable, consistently producing plants that look just like the plant from which they came. This process requires much patience, work and space. The most important quality of a hybridizer is a keen eye for plant habits and a willingness to discard all inferior seedlings.

Each of these seedlings is unique, and not exactly like any other plant. Each must be very carefully evaluated and only those that are truly better than the varieties already on the market be introduced. Raising seedlings from seed you purchase, or seed you produce, can be a rewarding experience, but a word of caution: hybridizing can be addictive.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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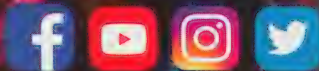


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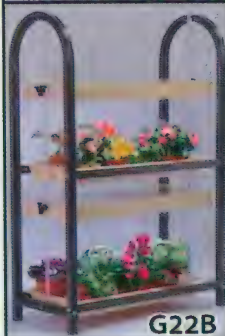
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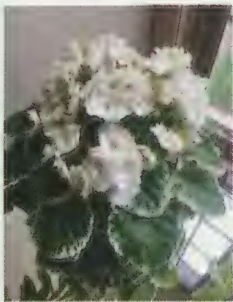
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■ African Violet Magazine

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•**Plant Registration:** Joe Bruns, 1220 Stratford Ln., Hanover Park, IL 60133-2667. *Email:* registration@avsa.org.

•**Master Varieties List (AMVL) & Supplements:** Download from AVSA website or order from AVSA office for \$2. Orders in writing only. Send any correction and/or description of new cultivars with hybridizer's name to: Joe Bruns, Plant Registration (see above).

•**Research:** Send suggested projects for scientific research or names of interested, qualified, potential research personnel to Dr. Jeff Smith, 3014 W. Amherst Rd., Muncie, IN 47304. *Email:* jsmith4@bsu.edu.

•**AVSA Scholarship Program:** Charles Ramser, 2413 Martin St., Wichita Falls, TX 76308. *Email:* charles.ramser@msutexas.edu.

■ AVSA Convention

•**Convention:** Kathy Lahti, Convention Chair, 4157 Oliver Ave. N.W., Annandale, MN 55302. *Email:* convention@avsa.org.

•**Future Dates:** Virtual Convention, May 30–June 6, 2021; Little Rock, AR in 2022; Atlanta in 2023. If interested in sponsoring a national convention in your area, contact Convention Chair.

•**Convention Programs:** Send special requests for workshop programs or interesting speakers to Convention Chair.

•**Convention Awards:** Send suggestions to: Sharon Gartner, 5036 Paradise Pond Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32207. *Email:* awards@avsa.org. Send contributions to AVSA Office.

•**Commercial Activities, Sales and Exhibits:** For information on convention entries or sales room, contact Lynn Lombard, 4710 W. Justin Lane, Spokane, WA 99208. *Email:* commercials@avsa.org.

Join, renew and learn more at www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org

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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 74 Number 3

ON THIS COVER:

Rob's Astro Zombie

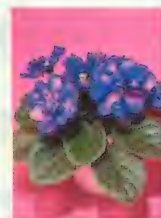
AVSA 75th Anniversary

Exhibited by: Ralph Robinson, 2010

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature

Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky



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African Violet Society of America

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Sue Ramser

2413 Martin St. • Wichita Falls, TX 76308

Email: president@avsa.org

As I write this, my final column as your President, I reflect on all the accomplishments AVSA has made during these two years. These include the new digital format for our *AVM* and the new digital membership level. The regular individual membership still remains with the added benefit of the digital *AVM*.

AVSA held a successful Virtual Convention in 2020. All who worked to accomplish this are extended a big Texas thank you! The new iMIS Membership software has been implemented, which significantly helps our Office Manager, Amy Carruth, with her day-to-day office activities. Thank you to all who worked to accomplish this implementation.

Our new and greatly improved website went live in January. Many people spent numerous hours to make this new website happen. Another big thank you to all who were instrumental in the launch of the new website.

Several committees have new chairs — we thank you for agreeing to share your time and talents to serve AVSA in these positions.

During the past two years we moved into a new office rental because of damage suffered from Tropical Storm Imelda, and experienced the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown and the subsequent rescheduling of the 2020 Little Rock Convention and the 2021 75th Anniversary Convention in Atlanta. We thank you, our members, for being patient and considerate during these trying times as we move to our “new normal.”

Donations

Thank you to all who generously donated to our recent and successful Annual Booster Appeal. Because of you, our generous donors, our financial future will be more secure.

Cyber Diamond Celebration

Help AVSA celebrate our 75th Anniversary during the week of May 30 to June 6 by attending the 2021 Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention. Convention Chair is Susan Anderson and Show Chair is Mary Corondan. They have planned this online convention with the help of many committee chairs to offer a fitting celebration to replace the planned Atlanta convention; Atlanta was the site of AVSA's first convention.

Some of the highlights of the Cyber Diamond Celebration include outstanding presentations, a beautiful virtual show, virtual tours, silent and live auctions, new introductions, officer installation, and Society awards, not to mention live meetings. See more information on page 4.

New Officers and Directors

A new slate of officers and directors will be elected at the Annual Membership Meeting. The Nominating Committee has presented a slate of officers who will advance AVSA into the future with new ideas, plans and goals for the future. I offer congratulations in advance for a successful term. As members, please step up and volunteer when asked to help your 2021 to 2023 officers accomplish their plans and goals. Volunteers are key to the success of AVSA. We thank you for sharing your time and talents with the Society.

It has indeed been an honor to serve as your President these past two years. Thank you for all your help during my term. Please continue to support your new officers as they begin their terms. Also, remember that we must continue our two-way communications to keep AVSA moving forward into the future. African violets will continue to connect us!

Celebrate 75 Years at the 2021 AVSA Cyber Convention

This month marks the 75th Anniversary of AVSA and we're ready to celebrate "cyber-style." The Cyber Convention is members' chance to celebrate, learn, exhibit plants or designs, and to connect! This year, we are expanding on the virtual convention we held in 2020 to offer an online experience as close as possible to in-person conventions. And the hard-working committee has plenty of fun surprises, including games, virtual tours, and special guests.

Be sure to register in time to enter exhibits in the Cyber Show, beginning Thursday, May 6 and through Friday, May 28. See the preliminary show schedule on page 10 of the March/April issue of *AVM* or on the Cyber Convention site.

Register Now

Until May 3, members pay only \$30 and nonmembers pay \$45 to join the fun and education. If you haven't already registered, you still can. Beginning May 3, the cost to register is \$40 for members and \$55 for nonmembers. Here's what you'll get with your registration:

- View the entire convention site when it opens on May 31.
- Attend all live events via Zoom links (once registered for those you choose to attend), including presentations and get-togethers with special guests.
- Take advantage of offers from participating AVSA Commercial Members.
- See the new plant introductions for 2021.
- Bid in silent and live auctions.
- Enter exhibits and view the 2021 AVSA Convention show.
- See all presentations and tours.
- Have fun in live get-togethers and activities, including Zoom cocktail hours, bingo and a scavenger hunt.

We're ready to
celebrate cyber-style.

With no travel expenses, this is a real bargain for members and nonmembers alike. If you have a few technology challenges, get help from someone in your bubble or "bring along" a nonmember registrant.

Convention Schedule

Here is a brief rundown of the schedule. Learn more on the AVSA Cyber Convention website.

Sunday, May 30: Beginning at noon Central (CDT) time, register for Julie Mavity-Hudson's presentation on "How to Zoom" and be ready for a week of fun. Learn how to participate in bingo and the scavenger hunt.

Monday, May 31: Register for Sandra Skalski's presentation "Basics of Growing African Violets." View the welcome video, access all forms, instructions and announcements, and then join your friends for two virtual cocktail hours that evening. The first cocktail hour features special guests Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson of The Violet Barn, and the next, *AVM* columnist Sandra Skalski.

Tuesday, June 1: View our "Spectacular Streptocarpus" presentation by Terri Vicenzi, see new introductions, and tour The Violet Barn. Plus, participate in our silent auction and live bingo via Zoom in the evening.

Wednesday, June 2: View Dr. Jeff Smith's "Science of Flowering" presentation and tour Moscow's Dom Fialki (House of Violets). You still can access new

introductions and bid in the silent auction. Join the evening cocktail hours, first with special guest Dr. Jeff Smith of Ball State University, and next with Ken Muzalewski, hybridizer of Hunter's violets.

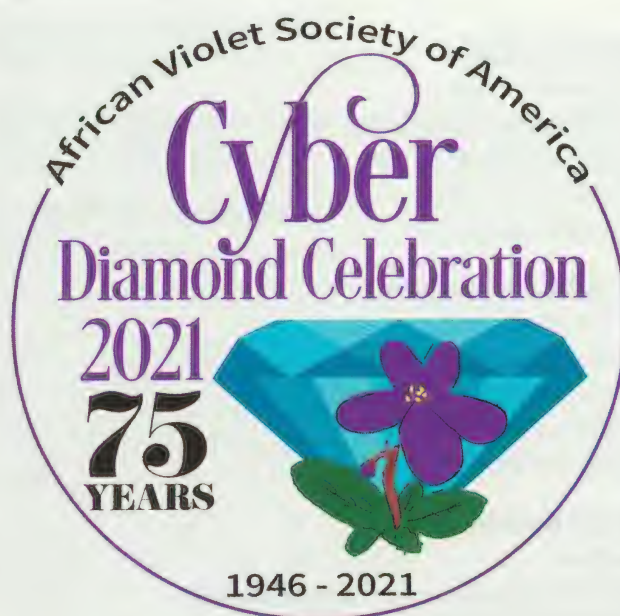
Thursday, June 3: The showroom opens at noon and the salesroom opens at 3 p.m. CDT. Our fifth presentation, "New Blossom and Leaf Artwork" is offered by Dianne Duggan. Plus, tour Nevsky Dom Fialki in St. Petersburg, Russia, and enjoy new introductions. Join Dianne Duggan in an evening cocktail hour, and in the second evening get-together, "meet" special guest Kathy Hajner of Hajner's Hybrids.

Friday, June 4: Richard Follett presents "75th Anniversary of AVSA" and the tour provides a preview of the attractions at next year's convention in Little Rock, Arkansas. View the showroom and visit the salesroom, silent auction, and new introduction gallery.

Saturday, June 5: Be sure to bid in the silent auction and submit your scavenger hunt entry form before noon CDT. Join the Judges Breakfast at 10 a.m. CDT, and the annual membership meeting and open

forum at 3 p.m. CDT via Zoom. The AVSA Board of Directors meets that afternoon and later, the Society will install new officers and directors.

Sunday, June 6: Watch for an announcement of the scavenger hunt winner at noon CDT and join your AVSA standing committee in a 2 p.m. Zoom meeting. Continue to view the showroom, salesroom, and new introductions.



Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from January 1, 2021, through February 28, 2021 Total: \$212

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

■ **\$100-\$499**

Sweetwater AVS, Islip Terrace, NY
In memory of William Paauwe

■ **\$25-\$49**

Grace W. Bailey, Virginia Beach, VA

■ **Under \$25**

Christopher J. Beney, Iowa City, IA

Mrs. G.E. Harmon, New York, NY
Virginia C. Gibson, Eureka, MT
Mary Faith Marshall, Richmond, VA
Mueller Greenhouse, Vista, CA
Martha Nix, Gerald, MO
North Star AV Council, Ramsey, MN
Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta, Hong Kong
Roger Williams, Chicopee, MA

AVSA 75th Anniversary: 1996 National Show Winners

Top show winners for the 50th Anniversary
Convention and Show in Atlanta in 1996.

■ Best in Show

Beginner's Luck
Exhibited by Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by Pritchett
Registered in 1976
Semiminiature

■ 2nd Best in Show

Definitely Darryl
Exhibited by Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by H. Pittman
Registered in 1991
Semiminiature

■ 3rd Best in Show

Bertha
Exhibited by Betty Ann Lewandowski
Hybridized by Bill Foster
Registered in 1986
Large standard

■ Best AVSA Collection of Standards

Magnolia, Joelle, Optimara Paris
Exhibited by Gene Loveland

■ 2nd Best AVSA Collection of Standards

Victorian Velvet, Looking Glass,
Midnight Magic
Exhibited by
Betty Ann Lewandowski

■ Best AVSA Collection of Minis or Semiminis

Definitely Darryl, Sugar Bear Blues,
Beginner's Luck
Exhibited by Kathy Lahti

■ 2nd Best AVSA Collection of Minis or Semiminis

Cirelda, Beacon Trail,
Rob's Sticky Wicket
Exhibited by Linda Lube

■ Best Holtkamp Memorial Collection

Optimara Little Crystal, Optimara Little Amethyst,
Optimara Rose Quartz
Exhibited by Pamela Trapp

■ Best Miniature

Spring Peach
Exhibited by Alice Grundy
Hybridized by H. Pittman
Registered in 1996

■ Best Semiminiature

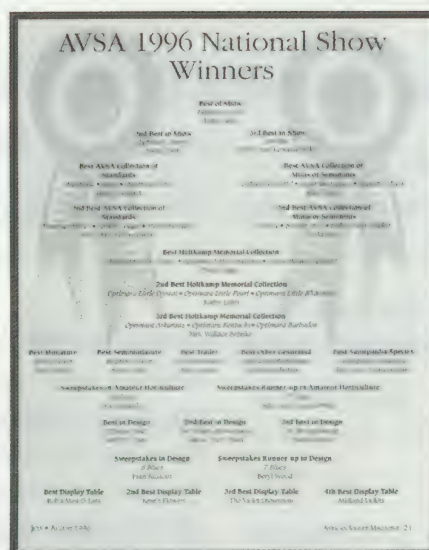
Beginner's Luck
Exhibited by Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by Pritchett
Registered in 1976

■ Best Trailer

Tiny Wood Trail
Exhibited by Alice Grundy
Hybridized by L. Ray

■ Best Other Gesneriad

Chirita (Primulina) subrhomboidea
Exhibited by Elizabeth Benke



The original list of winners and the souvenir book from the 1996 50th Anniversary Convention in Atlanta in 1996. Photos courtesy of Jim and Glenda Williams.

Best Saintpaulia Species

Saintpaulia ionantha

Exhibited by Betty Ann Lewandowski

■ **Sweepstakes in Amateur Horticulture**

28 Blues

Pat Richards

■ **Sweepstakes Runner-up in Amateur Horticulture**

27 Blues

Betty Ann Lewandowski

■ **Best in Design**

Olympic Year

Exhibited by Judith M. Carter

■ **2nd Best in Design**

Our Golden Anniversary

Exhibited by Aldene (Dee) Short

■ **3rd Best in Design**

In the Beginning

Exhibited by Dolores Gibbs

■ **Sweepstakes in Design**

8 Blues

Fran Russom

■ **Sweepstakes Runner-up in Design**

7 Blues

Beryl Wood

■ **Best Display Table**

Rob's Mini-O-Lets

■ **2nd Best Display Table**

Kent's Flowers

■ **3rd Best Display Table**

The Violet Showroom

■ **4th Best Display Table**

Midland Violets



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Spring Peach

Exhibited by: Penny Smith-Kerker
(Winner of Best Miniature in
1996 for Alice Grundy)

Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Miniature

AVSA 75th Anniversary: Celebrating Members



Julie Mavity-Hudson and Bill Price, 2008, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Linda and Jim Owens, 2005, Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



AVM photo committee, 2015, Kansas City, Missouri. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Marge and Tom Savage, 2010, Raleigh, North Carolina. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Bonus: 2010 Hans Inpijn and Ruth Rumsey. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Bonus: 2010 Frances Ratte and Nelly Levine. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.

AVSA 75th Anniversary: Celebrating Members



Enjoying a riverboat cruise at the 2005 annual convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Dais lineup, 2009, Reno, Nevada. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



The Canadian contingent at the 2009 annual convention in Reno, Nevada. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.



Lining up for the opening of the salesroom, 2009, Reno, Nevada. Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky.

Contest Entry —

Rejuvenating African Violets

By Jere Trigg Spanish Fort, Alabama

When new African violet hobbyists ask for advice on what they can do to restore vigor in their violets, I tell them that repotting with fresh potting mix works. It is probably the most neglected yet most effective way to reinvigorate plants. That means typically repotting standards every 9 to 12 months, and minis every 4 to 6 months. Sometimes, the plants set your timeline: Violets in need of repotting display several common symptoms, including reduced frequency and quantity of blooms, slower growth of new leaves at the crown, and a paler appearance of the lower of leaves with possible spotting.

Why Repot?

Most African violet potting mix contains organic matter from Canadian sphagnum moss or composted tree bark. Over time, the soil bacteria in the pot decompose this material, creating an increasingly acidic environment that eventually prevents the violet from taking in vital nutrients. In addition, the mix becomes more compacted over time, squeezing out air pockets that are essential for violet roots to breathe. Replacing the old mix with a fresh light mix corrects this problem and can solve a multitude of issues with unhealthy looking leaves.

Repotting is also an opportune time for removing the lower rows of old and damaged leaves, scraping and covering the neck with mix to promote new root growth, and disbudding blooms to divert the plant's full energy into new foliar growth and recovery. All these actions can trigger new growth and keep the violet in prime condition.

While these concepts have become second nature to experienced African violet growers, they might not be as obvious to those new to the hobby. The benefits of repotting become clearly visible with renewed crown growth after a couple of months as the root

system expands and is better able to absorb available nutrients. The improvements growers see above the surface are preceded by the development of a healthier and more robust root system below the surface within weeks after repotting.

Violets in need of repotting display several common symptoms ...

My Repotting Routine

Because an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, I try to repot my violets before they begin to display symptoms. I transfer all my standard leaf babies into 3-inch Solo cups (with drainage holes burned in). They might look way overpotted but at that young age, the roots of standards will rapidly penetrate the entire pot over the next several months. I prefer plastic over clay pots because they are less expensive, easier to clean, lighter weight, have multiple drainage holes, and are nonporous and therefore require less frequent watering.

I move young standard violets to 4.5-inch pots at about a 7-inch plant diameter and then to a 6.5-inch azalea (squatty) pot at a plant diameter of about 12 inches. Large standards will reach 18 to 20 inches under ideal growing conditions. My experience has been that for young, rapidly growing violets, the danger of root rot from overpotting is far less than the danger of stunting caused by leaving a violet in a pot that is too small for its rapidly expanding root system.



My plant stands filled with violets immediately after repotting.

During the first 9 months, I don't disturb the root ball during repotting; I just use the old pot as a form to make the exact size hole in the mix placed in the larger pot and put the root ball in it. After 9 months the potting mix is getting old, so I crumble most of it from the roots and replace it with fresh mix when repotting.

The benefits of repotting with fresh mix are many and probably widely undervalued. Your violet can experience a renaissance of health and beauty from this simple act. As you can see from the photos of violets immediately after repotting and then approximately 3 months later, the results are well worth the effort!



The repotted plants thriving 3 months later.

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received January 1, 2021, to and February 28, 2021 Total: \$567

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ \$100-\$199

Chuck Bingham
North Texas AV Judges Council
In memory of Mary Boland
Eric Summers

■ \$50-\$99

Rita Marie Kuni

■ \$25-\$49

Karyn Cichocki
In memory of Edward Bradford and Bill Paauwe
Alison Hutchinson
Shirley Jones

Sue Ramser

In memory of Bill Paauwe

Janet Riemer

In memory of Mary Boland

■ Under \$25

Christopher J. Beney

Randy G. Deutsch

To honor Mary McFarland

Marion Martin

Mueller Greenhouse

Martha Nix

North Star AV Council

Suet Lai Yeung Rosetta

Cyber Convention: How to Enter Smartphone Photos

By Jill Jensen and Sharon Shannon

So, you have worked hard to groom your show plants and get them ready to look their best for this year's Cyber Convention. It has been months of loving and consistent care. Your plants have had everything they need to be at their peak, with well-grown foliage and voluminous bloom. You are excited, and feel that your plants have never looked this good! What a great feeling. Way to go!

You know, however, that to get your plants over the "finish line," a number of "to-dos" remain on your list. You just read Richard Craft's article in the March/April issue of *AVM*, "Pro Tips for Violet Photography," so you're ready to take pictures and share them with the world. It is almost time to enter your top plants for the Cyber Convention.

Most of us retired our old Kodak Instamatic cameras, Polaroids, Brownies, and 35-mm film SLRs a long time ago. Some of us will capture the beauty of our plants with digital cameras, such as DSLRs, or the modern, digital version of the old Instamatics. Some serious photographers often are serious techies as well. For many of us, however, our primary way to capture images of our plants is through our smartphones. Beyond that, many of us feel digitally challenged. If so, this article is for you!

Whether your smartphone operates on Android or Apple software, you will find the information you need to get the images of your plants from your smartphone to your home computer or to the cloud, and eventually to the AVSA entries page on the Cyber Convention website.

Naming Photos

Before entering your photos, go to the AVSA convention website (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/next-convention) for information on how to name your photos and other such details. Smartphones

(and cameras) give default file names for photos, such as 20210310_132256.jpg. If you submit a photo with that name, no one will know it is yours or the name of the plant. You can rename photos on your smartphone, but it can be easier to do so on your computer.

Many of us feel
digitally challenged.
If so, this article is
for you.

Photo Resolution

Next, you want to make sure you are submitting high-quality photos. These file sizes typically fall between 2 MB and 4 MB, but the most important size factor is the dimension and how that affects the resolution. Lower resolution photos can be submitted for viewing online, but if photos are high resolution, they also might appear in *AVM* (see more in the online version of this article).

Adjust the resolution of the photos you take by checking the size in the smartphone's camera settings (usually by clicking a "settings" icon, such as a gear or similar image). Check the resolution of an individual photo by selecting the photo and looking at its details. Again, this is different on each kind of device.

File types ending in .jpg or .tif files are preferred, as again, they can be published in the magazine. If you don't know what .jpg or .tif files are, then don't worry, your smartphone is probably still set to .jpg

by default. To ensure a photo can go online and in AVM, keep the file as true to original as possible.

Finally, make sure there is nothing distracting in the background (no thumbs or feet please). It is easy to crop the photo after taking it, but it's even easier if there are no distractions to crop.

On iPhones and iPads

The Apple operating system might require users to download an app (such as Lightbox or Photo Investigator) to see and adjust photo size. Otherwise, you are best off transferring the photo to your computer, as we describe below.

On Android Systems

On an Android, typically there is a set of three vertical dots near the top (right) of the screen. Click there and select details. You will see a number, followed by the file type (such as .jpg), the file size (in MB or KB), and the resolution, noted by two numbers and an x (such as 2560 x 1440).

You also can easily check file information when the photo is on a PC (personal computer). This usually requires a right click and a pop-up; select Properties. Then select the tab that says Details. There, you can find information such as the date the photo was taken, along with its dimensions.

Transfer Photos

There are many ways to transfer your photos from your smartphone to your home computer (or Mac). To avoid overcomplicating the process, this article will describe how to use email (same for both iPhone and Android), as well as two other ways: one using a cable to directly connect your smartphone to your computer, and the other using a cloud storage service, such as Google Drive, Dropbox, or iCloud for Apple.

Transfer by Email

An easy way to transfer your photos to your computer is to simply email them to yourself and then download them to your computer files. The process is similar for both iPhone and Android smartphones.

Select your photos, edit (if necessary) and save the edits, click on the "share" icon, select "Email," enter your email address, and click the send icon. You can then go to your computer, log into your email system,

and save the photos in a folder that's easy for you to access. When emailing a photo from an iPhone, choose "Actual size" to keep the photo at a higher resolution.

If photos are high resolution, they also might appear in AVM.

Transfer by Cable

Connect your phone directly to your computer to transfer your photos using a cable. We've broken it down by phone system. Note that the first time you use Microsoft Photos to transfer files, it might take several minutes for Microsoft Photos to find the files on your phone.

Apple iPhones:

1. Connect your iPhone using the lightning cable (the same cable that charges it) to one of your computer's USB ports. Make sure to unlock your iPhone. If you are asked whether to trust the connected device, choose "trust."
2. Next, open the Microsoft "Photos" app by clicking on the Windows logo on your computer's toolbar, usually found on the lower left hand side of the screen), or if you have a search box by the Window logo, by typing "Photos" in the search box.
3. After you open the Photos app on your computer, on the top right of your screen, you will see "Import."
4. Click on Import and a drop-down menu will give you a choice to import "from a folder" or "from a connected device." Choose "from a connected device". If your iPhone is unlocked, the computer will look for photos on your iPhone. If your iPhone is locked, unlock it with your passcode, and try again.
5. After your PC searches your phone for photos, you will see in the upper left corner of the "Import Photos" window a link to the destination folder where the imported photos will be moved.
6. If the destination folder is one where you can readily locate the images, you do not need to do anything other than, click "import" below the import Photos window.

7. To retrieve the photo once you have imported it, click on “folders,” which will open a page showing various files where photos can be found on your computer. Find your chosen destination folder, click on that folder, and you will find your photos.

Android Smartphones:

Connect your Android phone directly to your computer to transfer your photos using the phone’s charging cable.

1. First, using the charging cable, connect your Android phone to one of your computer’s USB ports. If you see a message on your phone starting with “Use USB to,” then select “Transfer files.”
2. Follows steps 2-7 above under “Apple iPhones.”

Wireless Transfer

For the wireless (untethered) method, you will not need to connect your phone to your PC. However, you will want to download a cloud storage service where you can store your photos, if you don’t already have one (such as iCloud or Google Drive). Depending upon how much storage you need, Google Drive is free, but you will need to have an account with Google to use the app.

Apple iPhones:

1. First, find the iPhone Photos app on your phone and locate the photo that you wish to upload to your Google Drive account. Tap on the picture. If you need to make any edits to the photo such as cropping, you can make those edits in the iPhone Photos app at this point.
2. Next, click on “share” and you will see a number of choices. If you do not see the icon for the Google Drive, click on the “more” icon for additional app choices. If you have previously downloaded Google Drive to your iPhone, click on Drive, and you will be given a choice of a Google account to use. If you have a Google account, your account should be listed. Choose your account for Google Drive.
3. At this point, you will be shown a list of the photos that you have chosen to share with Google Drive: In the upper right corner of your screen, you will see and select “Upload.” In a short time, depending upon the size of the photo and your internet speed, the photo uploaded to Google Drive should be available the next time you access your Google Drive account.

**Don’t let technology
get you down.**

4. Because your Google Drive is in the “cloud,” you can access the photos you have stored in Google Drive (or another cloud-based system) and either transfer the photos to another site or download them to your computer.
5. You can follow similar steps as those given above for Google Drive for other sharing methods. You can readily transfer your photos from your smartphone to any other cloud storage service such as Amazon Drive, One Drive, and the like, using the “share” option in the iPhone Photos app.

Android Phones:

1. To upload your photos from an Android phone to a cloud server, first go to the Photo Gallery and select your photo(s). If you need to make any edits to the photos such as cropping, you can easily make those edits at this point.
2. The rest of the process is the same as for the iPhone. Please see steps 2 through 5 above.

Of course, there are many ways of storing and transferring your beautiful plant photos. The few examples above are just that: examples. You or others might know of easier ways to get the job done. Or maybe this article will give you hints to help you navigate through your phone system.

AVSA wants to ensure that everyone who wants to participate in the fun of our Cyber Convention can do so. Don’t let technology get you down. If you are having trouble with photo edits, saves, or transfers, or if you would like assistance in making sure you can upload your entries to the Cyber Convention website, AVSA volunteers will be available to help. Just ask!

Editor’s note: See a version of this article on the Cyber Convention website, with helpful screenshots for many of the steps.

Auction Time is Coming!

By Candace Baldwin, Auction Chair

Do you love the thrill of winning something, as well as knowing you've donated to a worthy cause? This year's convention auction is right for you.

We are planning an auction for the Cyber Convention to raise funds for the general operating fund of AVSA. As always, a successful auction begins with generous donations from you, our individual members, commercial members, and clubs.

We are working out the details, but both a silent and online auction are being planned. AVSA will determine whether donation items will be included in the silent or live auction.

Since this year's auction will be virtual, donations will need to include shipping charges from the donor to the winning bidder. If you have a larger item to donate and are concerned about the shipping costs being covered, you can request that a minimum bid amount be placed on the item to cover

the cost of shipping. If it doesn't reach the minimum bid, the item will not sell.

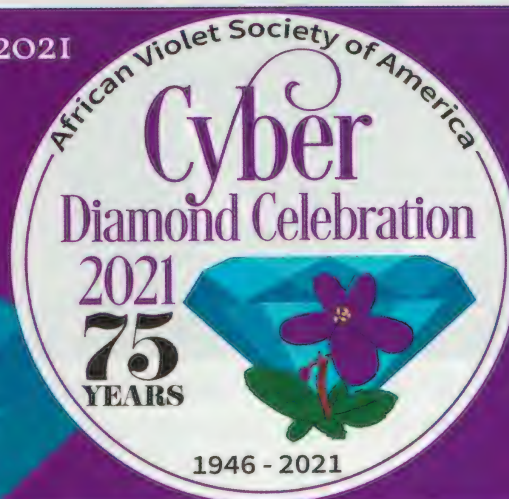
Those donating items will need to provide a picture and description of items to post on the website ahead of time.

Please consider donating a violet-related item or anything rare, unique or unusual in nature. We'll acknowledge all donors on the convention website. Let me extend my sincere appreciation in advance to those who donate and those who bid to win an item. The generosity on both sides of the auction ensures that AVSA can continue to be an organization dedicated to violet enthusiasts who enjoy these beautiful plants.

As more details become available, we will post information on the AVSA website under the convention pages.

May 30, 2021 • June 6, 2021

Celebrating 75 Years





Russian and Ukrainian Violets: How AVSA Has Helped

By Vladimir Kalgin Moscow, Russia

Email: vkalgin@yahoo.com

My wife, Tatiana, and I became members of the AVSA in 2001. As AVSA celebrates its 75th anniversary this year, we would like to take a look at our 20-year membership, with a brief summary below. The passion for violets has changed our lives in many ways. Thanks to AVSA, we learned a lot, and I would like the American growers to know that they helped change the African violet life in Russia.

Getting to Know American Growers

In May 2002, Tatiana and I went to Washington, D.C., to the AVSA national convention for the first time. There we saw beautifully grown violets, listened to lectures, and purchased the latest introductions.

It was very important for us to meet with the American hybridizers. The first hybridizer we visited after the convention was Frank Tinari. Sadly, on the door of the greenhouse, we saw a sign saying that the greenhouse was closed due to Frank's funeral. We moved on and visited the Sorano and Robinson greenhouses.



Meeting Joyce and Kent Stork in 2002 in Washington, D.C.



Top: Tatiana and I met with Paul Sorano at Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses in 2002. Bottom: We met with Olive and Ralph Robinson at their greenhouses on our 2002 trip.

When we returned to Philadelphia a couple of days later, Tinari's greenhouse was again in operation, and we looked at the plants and the small shop next to it. So, from the first AVSA convention, we brought back several hundred plants, but, most importantly, our impressions of the work of American hybridizers.

Early Violet Exchanges

In those days in Russia, owning hundreds of violets from America was a miracle. It should be said that in the 1990s, the exchange of violets between Russia and the United States was not without problems.

In the early 1990s, Irina Danilina, the head of the Moscow club, sent violet leaves to the United States through familiar diplomats, and the violets went to a club in Seattle. The club asked Cathleen Grove, in response, to send the leaves to Russia through the same diplomats.

At one of the AVSA conventions, I asked Cathleen if she remembered the story. Cathleen said she remembered very well, especially that the next day two “men in black” came to her door and told her that she should not pass the strange packages to the Russian diplomats.

In July 2002, about a month after we came back from the AVSA convention, we established “Dom Fialki,” the “House of Violets” in Moscow. There were many details that we saw at the AVSA convention that were useful to us. For example, we even needed to understand how to design the labels on the plants. I remember that at the AVSA convention, we attended a meeting of affiliated clubs held by then-Affiliate Chair Beverly Promersberger.



Russian and American friends visiting at the 2017 Annual Convention, including Cathleen Grove, center.

There we learned that to compensate for expenses, the club usually gets 25 percent of the sales of plants at shows. We then set this percentage at our shows as well. Also at the 2002 convention, I

received permission from Jack Wilson, the president of the AVSA at that time, to translate and publish in Russia the AVSA Handbook for Judges. Since then, we have been judging plants at shows in the House of Violets.

We consider it very
important ... to
regularly exchange
new varieties.

House of Violets

Today, the House of Violets hosts African violet shows of the groups “Moscow Growers,” “Regions of Russia” and “Moscow Violets.” The members of these groups are the best growers in Russia. These groups compete with each other in the beauty of the plants and in the organization of the events — in lectures and presentations — which allow them to find new ideas and improve the organization of shows.

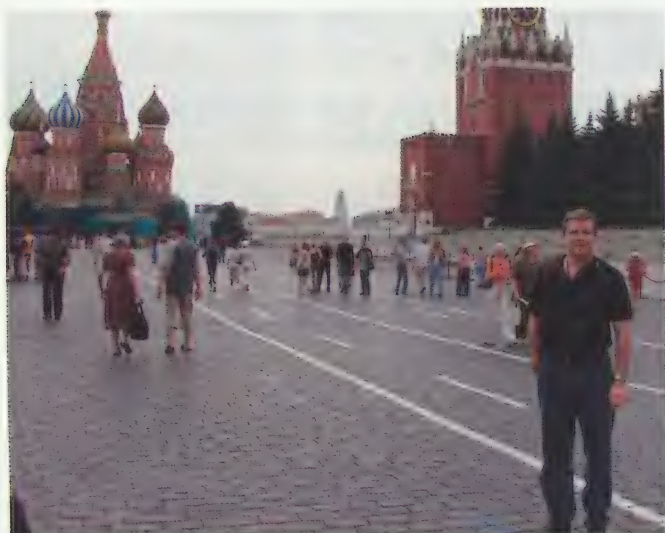
During the year, House of Violets holds 13 shows lasting 11 days each. Since 2002, we have held about 250 shows. At each show visitors can see more than 600 flowering plants.

The House of Violets also sells plants and pots, soils, fertilizers, literature and other goods necessary for violet growers. According to the electronic counter that is fixed to the door of the House of Violets, from 2010 to 2020, we had more than a million visitors.

However, the most important task of the House of Violets is to work with hybridizers around the world to achieve new breakthroughs in hybridizing.

Strengthening Our Ties

Joyce Stork asked me to make a presentation at the AVSA convention in Tucson in 2004. I named it, “The African Violet Boom in Russia.” The next day, a very successful auction was held, where about 100 leaves of Russian varieties we had donated sold very well.



Paul Sorano at Moscow's Red Square in 2004.

In the summer of 2004, Paul Sorano came to visit us. We visited Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev, Ukraine. About a month after Paul's visit to St. Petersburg, where there were no violet clubs, the first club appeared, and now there are four of them there. We continued to introduce well-known American hybridizers to our growers. In 2007, Ralph and Olive Robinson — and in 2009, Joyce and Kent Stork — came to visit us.

In 2005, we asked the AVSA to introduce a special award at the shows called "The Best Russian/Ukrainian collection" to promote Russian/Ukrainian hybrids. In addition to a cash award, the winner receives a silver medal from the House of Violets "To the Winner of the Show." In 2018 and in 2019, this award was given to Debbie McInnis.



With our silver medal winner, Debbie McInnis, in Houston in 2019.

We continue to exchange new introductions between American and Russian/Ukrainian hybridizers. Every

year we bring dozens of new varieties home from each AVSA convention. American hybridizers Paul Sorano and Ralph and Olive Robinson regularly receive packages from us with new Russian/Ukrainian varieties, with about 200 plants in one package. We also send violets to Steve and Donna Turner, who have become the main representatives of our hybridizers in the United States, and have the largest collection of Russian/Ukrainian varieties. At the AVSA 2018 convention, Steve and Donna made a presentation on "The Growing Popularity of the Russian African Violet." In fall 2018, Steve and Donna visited the House of Violets in Moscow and met with African violet growers in St. Petersburg.



Steve and Donna Turner with Russian/Ukrainian hybridizers at the House of Violets in 2018.

In 2020, the AVSA convention was held in a virtual format because of the pandemic. This included a Virtual New Introduction Gallery. Joyce Stork asked our hybridizers to provide photos and 30 of them sent photos of about 200 new introductions.

We consider it very important for the development of the world's African violet hybridization to regularly exchange new varieties and new genes between hybridizers. We are glad to see new introductions by American hybridizers, and we are trying to bring them to Russia as soon as possible. Russian/Ukrainian violets, with their large flowers and unusual colors, attract American growers and allow American hybridizers to improve their hybrids.

This is how our African violet world continues to develop.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

LE-Koster

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: E. Lebeteskaia
Standard



In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

Early summer is a fun time to try your hand at pollinating African violets. Day length is near maximum for the year and your plants are probably blooming well. This gives hybridizers plenty of opportunities to speculate about combining this bloom with a particular foliage on that size or type of plant.

Crosses made now, however, won't produce mature seeds until the end of 2021 and won't bloom until mid- or late 2022. African violet hybridizing is a slow process, but here are some tips that might help with your attempts this season.

Q: Is it common for African violets to self-pollinate?

A: Generally, most African violets do not self-pollinate. The stigma usually grows away from the anther sacs. Pollen is usually not released from the anther sacs either, so self-pollination is not the norm. However, there are exceptions.

One common cause of self-pollination is thrips infestation. Thrips feed on the pollen of African violets and often break open the anthers, releasing pollen into the air. The thrips also can become coated with pollen and crawl around in the flower, depositing pollen on the stigma. The result is self-pollination and an unexpected appearance of seedpods. Many a grower has discovered a thrips infestation because of finding seedpods on their plants. However, some growers use these seedpods as their first experience in growing African violets from seed, so thrips don't always have to be negative news.

From time to time, an African violet appears that consistently has twisted styles on the pistil. The twisted style can cause the stigma to grow into an anther sac, resulting in self-pollination. It's likely that the twisted style is a genetic fault of the plant

but there could be an environmental cause, too, such as a change in humidity. Some growers think that the twisted style trait is linked to certain colors of flowers such as white petals. The trait is most obvious in pansy-shaped flowers with single petals, similar to the flowers found in the species plants.

It's likely that the twisted style is a genetic fault of the plant ...

Speaking of the species, *S. shumensis* is one that often self-pollinates for some reason, possibly due to the twisted style fault. Another species that self-pollinates, at least under my growing conditions, is *S. ionanthus* clone *difficilis*.

Q: Is it recommended to emasculate the flowers of the seed parent when doing cross-pollination work?

A: If you want to be absolutely certain that the pollen parent is another plant and self-pollination has been avoided, emasculating the flower (removing the stamens or anther sacs) would be a good practice. However, since African violets don't usually self-pollinate, I'm not sure it's worth the effort in most cases to emasculate the seed parent. Removing the stamens or anther sacs can damage the flower and cause it to die. If you emasculate the flowers only to find them drying up without setting seed, you might rethink the need to emasculate. You might be doing more damage than good with the emasculation process.

Emasculation also might be unnecessary if the flower is a double or semi-double type. The conversion of stamens to extra petals might make the male flower sterile and no pollen is present. Therefore, the flower has no ability to self-pollinate and produce a seedpod. Check a few anthers and see if they contain viable pollen. If the inside of the anther sac is wet and mushy with no visible pollen, there is no need to emasculate the flowers.

Q: The flower stalk often turns brown and dies when I try to pollinate a flower. What is causing this problem?

A: I'm guessing that the flower stalk is dying because it has been damaged during the pollination attempt. If you hold the flower at the base during pollination, you might be squeezing, twisting, or bending the flower stalk. This damage could cause the cells to die and the flower to abort. Another possibility is that you have oils or creams on your fingers that are damaging the cells. Your skin could also be leaving behind a light concentration of sweat or salt that is killing the stem cells. There could be several reasons why the flower stems are damaged and dying.

If you must manipulate the flower during pollination, try holding the flower by the petals rather than at the flower stem. The petals are going to dry up and die if the pollination is successful, so any damage caused by handling is much less likely to cause the flower to abort.

Q: Is it a good idea to pollinate several flowers on the same bloom stalk?

A: The flowers on a bloom stalk are likely to be at different stages of receptivity to pollination because they will be at different ages of development. Try pollinating all open flowers on the same bloom stalk, wait 2 to 3 days, then repeat the pollination, wait 2 to 3 days, and repeat again.

This strategy should result in several flowers becoming pollinated and successfully developing seedpods. This approach to pollination is particularly good for hybridizers who have trouble telling exactly when the stigma is receptive for pollination.

Pollinating several flowers on the same bloom stalk also can increase your chances of getting seedpods

to reach maturity. There is a hormone signal from the developing seedpod that encourages the bloom stalk to stay alive and healthy. If there is only a single seedpod, the signal can be too weak to keep the bloom stalk alive until the seeds are mature. The bloom stalk might dry up too early, before the seeds mature.

The combined signals from several seedpods reinforce each other and increase the strength of the total hormone signal. This encourages the bloom stalk to stay green until the seeds mature.

African violet seedpods do most of their growing within the first few weeks following pollination. After this time there is little outward change in the seedpod. It is tempting to harvest the seedpod too soon, while it is still green. Be sure to put a tag or something with a date on the bloom stalk so you can have an accurate record for when pollination and seed set were achieved.

Wait until the bloom stalk and the seedpod have dried and turned brown before removing the seedpod from the plant. The seed will usually take 4 to 6 months to mature. It's a good idea to put the detached seedpod in a warm, dry place for another 2 to 3 weeks to further ripen the seeds. If you are patient in allowing the seedpod to fully dry and mature, your chances of having viable seed and good germination will be improved.

Q: Do African violet seeds require a cool temperature treatment to improve germination?

A: No, unlike plants like oaks, which require their seeds to have a cold treatment to simulate winter, African violet seeds do not require a cold temperature treatment to improve germination. The long months of seedpod maturation appear to be an adaptation to the rainfall seasons in Africa, not the temperature changes.

The wild species bloom during the wet season and hold their seed during the dry season, which lasts for several months. Seeds are mature and released from the seedpods at the start of the next rainy season. This appears to be the reason that African violet seedpods take 4 to 6 months to ripen and mature.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sport of Lady Diana

Exhibited by: Murna A. Kosowan, 2009
(Lady Diana hybridized by: E. Fisher, 1981)
Large Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Astro Zombie

Exhibited by: Ralph Robinson, 2010
(Close-up of blossom in cover photo)
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
Semiminiature

Contest Entry —

Where Did Those “Unique” African Violets Come From?

By Linda Hall Ravenwood, Missouri

Email: llhall@grm.net

In 2016, I was asked to give a presentation about the “unique” African violets that I grow and love. I presented this information at the AVSA 2017 National Convention in Orlando, Florida. I have grown and exhibited these delightful and different plants for many years, but I never knew their origins, so I began my research.

Researching Unique Varieties

I started with Brenda Petry, who grows and sells many of these varieties. Then I contacted Rich Follett, who worked with David Senk (Senk’s varieties). Of course, George McDonald (Mac series) was also on my list of contacts. Then I contacted Jeff Jackson (Imp’s series) and Carol Eros (Morgan’s series). These are fantastic growers and hybridizers of the clackamas, bustle-back and wasp varieties.

It was also suggested that I contact Tina Moreno (Gecko series). She had a wealth of information about the Jimmy Dates hybrids of bustle-back and wasp blossoms. I had forgotten that Jimmy was the first to hybridize those varieties and Tina was kind enough to send me all the information she had acquired.

A side note here: At the 1989 AVSA Convention in Kansas City, Missouri, I met Jimmy Dates. (I was new to the violet world and even less knowledgeable of the gesneriad world.) He had just written a book on miniature sinningias for the Gesneriad Society and I was fascinated by them (I still am). I picked Jimmy’s brain about everything to do with sinningias. I sure wish I knew then what I know now about bustle-back plants. What a missed opportunity!

Bustle-Back and Wasp Origins

Back to the subject at hand. This is how the story goes of the first bustle-back, wasp blossomed plants. In 1957, Jimmy Dates started hybridizing bustled

leaf African violets when he obtained a plant called “Bustles” from Mrs. Hotchkiss of Peoria, Illinois. A sport had shown up in a pan of leaves she had set down of Purple Prince. The leaves were “compound,” as Jimmy liked to call them. The blossoms had purple thread-like petals, a wasp blossom!

In 1957, Jimmy Dates started hybridizing bustled leaf African violets ...

His hybridizing resulted in an introduction of more than 60 varieties, of which 21 were registered. His first registered variety was Pink Wasp in 1964. I have a copy of Jimmy’s hand-typed descriptions. Even though it is a copy, it is a treasure! Thank you, Tina.

Clackamas Foliage

The background of clackamas foliage that I have came from an article I found on the internet by Nancy Robitaille titled, “How to Recognize Clackamas Foliage.” It is remembered this way: At a garden center in Clackamas County, Oregon (near Portland), mold appeared on all the African violets in the plant room. Hoping to save a few, owner and hybridizer Oppen sprayed the plants with two deadly products. All but two of the plants were destroyed.

At least one of the surviving plants had mutated leaves where all the lines in the leaves were parallel to the veins, similar to the pattern on watermelons. One also had variegated leaves. Oppen hybridized with these plants, but they didn’t seem to make it

out of the local area. That was back in the 1960s. A few must have survived because they are the background of the clackamas varieties of today.

My first clackamas variety was Clackamas Rattler. It suckered so badly that I ended up throwing it away. George McDonald has hybridized several very nice clackamas varieties, including Mac's Walkabout Uluru, which is a lovely, variegated variety. Maas' Angela is another beautiful clackamas variety. I will say that clackamas-leafed varieties are few and far between. I wish there were more.

Showing Unique Varieties

So many well-behaved, bustle-back, wasp varieties are now available that I would not even know where to begin. If entering them in a show, many can and should be exhibited in a regular color class. However, some are quite unruly and might need to be exhibited in a class with special rules for "unique" African violets.

One plant that I have, Senk's Anemone, is so unique that I would not even know how to begin to judge it. I worked long and hard to obtain a plant of this variety and I think it is definitely worth the shelf space.

If we let these varieties fade away because they are not "your normal African violet," we lose some of our African violet heritage. I choose to preserve our history; I hope you will too. I want to leave you with a quote from George MacDonald:



Left: Maas' Angela has clackamas foliage. Right: Morgan's Muskaan has bustle-back foliage.



Left: Wesley's Hoodoo Priestess has bustle-back foliage. Right: Some plants, like Senk's Anemone, are truly unique.

"Try a couple of these marvelous African violets. My intention in hybridizing these varieties was to build a bridge, not a wall. Carry the past proudly into the future. Who knows, you may fall in love with them, as I have."

Sports: Blessing or Curse?

By Bill Chaney La Pine, Oregon

Sports are plants (or sometimes only a part of a plant) that are different from the original. If you have paid good money to buy a leaf on eBay and the resulting babies produce a plant that has blooms quite different from what you expected, it can be a big disappointment. However, if the blooms are beautiful and different from the original, you might be fortunate enough to have a sport that can be propagated or even introduced.



Photo of Kilauea showing normal chimera blooms on the left and a blue and white chimera sport on the right. Photo by Ernő Berkó and used with permission.

About Sports

All plants grow by cell division. When cells divide, they must produce a copy of their chromosomes. Sometimes during this process, a mistake occurs. All cells that divide and grow from this cell with the altered chromosomes will have that same alteration. Most often, that change in the chromosomes affects some part of the plant that is never noticed. But sometimes that change in the chromosomes causes a change in the bloom or leaf. We call the plant (or affected plant part) a sport.

Some plants produce sports more often than others and some plants produce the same sport on multiple

The hormone that causes these platelets to form is different from rooting hormone.

occasions. The AVSA maintains a list of registered sports and the variety from which they originated. If you study this list, you will notice that most of the sports seem to be discovered by the hybridizer of the original variety. That is because the hybridizer is likely to have propagated more plants than anyone else. Sports are part of a natural phenomenon that occurs at a very low frequency, so the more plants you propagate, the more likely you will encounter a sport.

Sport Growers

There is a person on the list who has discovered and named more sports than anyone else. His name is Stan Ko and he lives in Hong Kong. Stan has reported that he propagates plants from leaves in the normal fashion, but he chooses the smallest and weakest baby plants and subjects them to stressful conditions to shock them and encourage sports. He grows these tiny, weak plants at higher-than-normal temperatures and in a more acidic medium than normal. Stan has seen up to 20 percent of these babies grow to be sports.

One of the most commonly seen types of flower variations in sports is a chimera pattern. In a chimera bloom, often one portion of the petal is missing the color that was seen previously across the entire

petal, or the color of the petal becomes concentrated in a stripe in the center of the petal. Jere Trigg of Alabama has introduced many beautiful standard varieties, and several are chimeras (see photos).



Jere's Chantilly Lace (top) and its sport (bottom), a chimera named Jere's Star Burst. Photos by Jere Trigg and used with permission.

Not All Sports Are Chimeras

Certainly not all sports are a chimera pattern. They do usually involve a loss of color or even a change in color. Jere produced a beautiful seedling of Jere's Roll Tide x Powder Keg that has a solid red sticktite star bloom with attractive foliage. He has named it Jere's Frankly Scarlett. During the normal leaf propagation of this variety, an attractive sport emerged with a "tie-dyed" appearance, which he has named Jere's Serendipity.

Some sports, like chimeras, cannot be propagated from leaf cuttings like most varieties. This is because the genetic modification that causes the altered flower color pattern is only present in the parts of the plants that directly lead to the bloom, such as the bloom stalk. These varieties can only be propagated by using the bloom stalk or from suckers on the plant. In either method, the chance of getting a true blooming chimera is high, but there is no guarantee.



Jere's Frankly Scarlett (top) and its sport, Jere's Serendipity. Photos by Jere Trigg and used with permission.

Bloom-Stalk Propagation

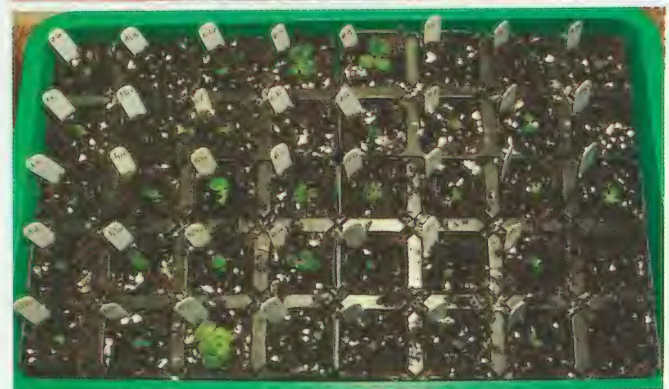
Bloom-stalk propagation can be accomplished by rooting the bloom stalk in a fashion similar to rooting a leaf. A new plant arises from either the base of the bloom stalk or sometimes from the axil of the tiny leaflet on the bloom stalk. It is also possible to encourage platelets to form in the leaf axils by using a plant hormone.

The hormone group that causes these platelets (cytokinins) to form is different from the rooting hormone with which many gardeners are familiar. One such cytokinin is called 6-benzylaminopurine (BAP) and it is a synthetic growth hormone that stimulates cell division and the formation of shoots. It is often used by orchid growers in propagation and is sometimes sold as Keiki cloning paste.

A grower must scratch or insert the cloning paste into the tissue of the leaf axil while the bloom stalk is still on the plant. The developing shoots can be removed and rooted when they are large enough to handle (see photos below).



Whether a sport is a blessing or a curse depends on your goal, but like hybridizing, having a unique plant is exciting. So, the next time you are potting up babies, before throwing away those tiny weak ones, consider giving them a little shock. Place them in a warmer spot or make their mix a little extra acidic, and hope that you end up with a beautiful sport. And if you spot a bloom stalk with a decidedly different bloom that you like, give bloom-stalk propagation a try.



These babies (and others) were separated (top), and transferred to a common pot (center), then to a tray after rooting (bottom). Photos by Ernő Berkó and used with permission.



A bloom stalk being treated with BAP (top) and the resulting babies it produced (bottom). Photos by Ernő Berkó and used with permission.

Sometimes a sport will occur at a point in the plant that results in a single bloom stalk that exhibits a chimera pattern. If that bloom stalk is not propagated, that chimera sport could be lost forever. Bloom-stalk propagation also can be extremely useful in those situations in which a valued chimera plant is reverting to its non-chimera form. Propagating a bloom stalk that is still showing the chimera pattern often can produce a true-blooming chimera plant.

Coming Events

Spring African violet shows and sales still might be cancelled because of the COVID-19 virus. This list represents those shows scheduled on our website as of April 1, 2020. Be sure to check the AVSA website Events page (www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook, or contact the organizers below for the latest information.

■ May 8 — Nevada

Glitter Gulch African Violet Growers Show and Sale
Nevada Garden Club Center

800 Twin Lakes Drive
Las Vegas, NV
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Richard Craft: ggavg_lv@gmail.com

■ May 30-June 6 — AVSA Website

AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration
Show and educational sessions
Participate online
See details on page 4
Mary Corondan, Show Chair: secondvp@avsa.org

“Perfectly Pittman” Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

Available in the
AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20



Family Portrait: *Sinningia cardinalis* ‘Innocent’

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086
Email: pfkroll@me.com

There are several tuberous gesneriads that we see entered in our AVSA and Gesneriad Society shows: *Nautilocalyx*, *Chrysothemis* and *Sinningia*. The last is by far the most often seen and exhibited. There are several sizes of *Sinningia*, from the micro-miniature to the full-sized *S. speciosa* hybrids. We often see species sinningias as well.

My choice for this column’s portrait is *S. cardinalis* ‘Innocent’. This is a cultivar of the species *S. cardinalis*, which typically has — as you might guess — a cardinal-red bloom. The cultivar *S. cardinalis* ‘Innocent’ has pure white blooms, however. The foliage is the same as other *S. cardinalis* cultivars, a medium to dark green and slightly hairy on the surface of the leaves.

One of the most annoying factors about sinningias when they are in bloom is their tendency to drop pollen from the blossoms onto the foliage. This pollen is impossible, or nearly so, to remove when grooming your plant(s) for entry! No matter how much you brush, or wipe with a soft, moist sponge, the pollen just stays there and defies you. Most judges understand this situation and will not deduct points, realizing the problem.

***Sinningia* Tubers**

Most *Sinningia* prefer to grow with the tuber partially above the soil line and not completely buried (see Photo 1). This helps in several ways: It helps to keep the tuber from rotting with water sitting on or in it, and it displays the often-interesting tubers, which have a structure and appearance that add ornamental value to the entry.

A story that comes to mind is this: At our local show several years ago, a husband and wife were walking through the show. She was intrigued, but he was obviously impatient to leave. At one point, when they

Never tug on a spent bloom or a dried-up section.

were looking over the gesneriad section, he turned to her and said, “You can’t grow these plants at all, and these people are growing them in potatoes!” Everyone within earshot enjoyed a good laugh. Yes, the tubers do look similar to a potato; some are smooth, some gnarled, and their shapes are indeed ornamental.



Photo 1. *S. cardinalis* ‘Innocent’ tuber resting partially above the soil level.



Photo 2. *S. cardinalis* 'Innocent' crown and white blooms.

Grooming and Showing

The plant in Photo 2 has one large, central crown and two smaller side crowns. Each of the smaller side crown growths also has blooms; that's a good thing and to be rewarded when judging. The central crown had been in full bloom for a few weeks when the photo was taken, and I regularly trimmed off the spent blooms.

When grooming sinningias, it is absolutely necessary to use sharp scissors. **Never** tug on a spent bloom or a dried-up section of the plant! Although the dried-up plant material might seem fragile enough to do so, it is rather like copper wire of the same caliber. You must cut it off and never give in to the temptation to pull or pinch with your thumbnail.

Also, it is advisable to leave a stem of 1 or 2 inches length on the tuber when the plant begins to go dormant. Sometimes, new growth will come from that dried-up stem.

Tubers that have gone dormant can be left in their pots, with a bit of water sprinkled on the soil surface until new growth is noticed. Growers also can remove the tuber from the pot, clean it off and store it in a plastic bag with some barely moist perlite or vermiculite until new growth is detected.

I store my dormant tubers and rhizomes in plastic bags and in a shallow box on the floor under the bottom shelf of a light stand. I pull the box out each week and examine the baggies to see what is beginning to sprout, potting them up as they sprout. One of the advantages of gesneriads that go dormant is that they provide extra shelf space during their dormancy periods.

If you have not yet tried growing a *Sinningia*, you will enjoy the displays they provide in lush foliage and spectacular blooms.

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Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Tips and Techniques: More on Photography

By Dale Martens

Editor's Note: In the March/April 2021 issue of AVM, Richard Craft interviewed several excellent photographers of African violets to round up tips for members when entering online exhibits or posting to social media. Here are two more tips and photos from Dale Martens.



Gloxinia erinoides 'Chapada dos Guimaraes,' photo by Dale Martens.

When taking this photo, it was critical for me to capture the markings on the leaves of *Gloxinia erinoides* 'Chapada dos Guimaraes' and yet not

overexpose the white flowers on this 12-inch-tall plant. I used an LED lamp pointed at the leaves and the camera's normal flash on the flowers.



Monopyle species blossom, photo by Dale Martens.

This is a winning gesneriad entry of a 1-inch-wide *Monopyle* species flower next to black seeds inside a seedpod. The camera's LED ring-flash attachment highlights the flower's front, and I also used an LED lamp on the upper left side. The flower and seedpod were still attached to the plant and I didn't want the rest of the plant exposed to light.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Haberlea ferdinandi-coburgii

Exhibited by: Bill Price, 2009

Contest Entry —

Creating Container Gardens — My Journey

By Dolores Gibbs San Marcos, Texas

In 1978, at my very first convention, which was held in downtown Austin, Texas, I was so impressed with the beautiful violets. But it was the container gardens that left a lasting impression on me. I wanted to be able to enter a terrarium in a show, so I put one together, using a fish tank, for a Spring First Austin judged show.

First Tries

In the beginning, I thought that every container garden should have a pink *Episcia* somewhere in it for color; thinking mine still was not good enough, I went to a nursery and purchased a *Streptocarpus* with large, bright pink blooms and yes, of course I received a red ribbon. The back of the entry card was completely covered with remarks and advice. Nearly 10 years later, I entered a terrarium at the AVSA Convention and Show in Dallas and here, I received another dreaded red ribbon.

While studying some of the winning entries, I decided one must have a bubble bowl for the terrarium to win Best Container Garden, but of course it was the entire design that made for a winning entry. I was able to find a bubble bowl and began getting blue ribbons. Having attended 22 AVSA conventions, I have entered 17 design classes, and once in a while, I win Best in Class and even Best Design.

Container Garden Tips

Our local shows have four classes in the container garden section; they are terrarium, large and small dish garden,

and natural planting. Along the way, my interest also included the large and small dish gardens, which I enjoy putting together for competition. Photos 1 and 2 show some of my favorite items and supplies that I use regularly.



Photo 1. Some of my favorite design materials.



Photo 2. Typical containers and supplies.

Trying to find just the right plants has always been a challenge, so when I find some I like, I try to propagate them; little ferns and ivies add so much to your design. My advice to those of you who admire container gardens and want to enter them in a judged show is to always remember the following: The garden is a design with height, contrast of material, an interesting arrangement of your plant material, and with an African violet.

The reason there is a section for the container gardens is to show the public how violets can be used in their homes. Entries in horticulture must have been in the possession of the exhibitor for at least 90 days, but in design that is not required. Instead, the plant must be taken out of the pot and planted within your garden, making it look like an established planting.

Many designers use potting soil to anchor their plants in the container, but I have found that using damp, long-fibered sphagnum moss works for me. Collecting design material is fun whether it is going to nurseries with friends or looking for items while traveling. I have sand from White Sands, New Mexico, and even some black sand from along the Kenai River that I brought back from a trip to Alaska. Small pieces of driftwood and little rocks are great additions to your design.

AVSA no longer requires a title for your garden but when a state or local club gives a title to each class, I look up that location and try to find a theme for my design. I like to place a small accessory, such as an

animal, where the judges and public have to look for it. All classes require completion of a 3x5 card listing the plant material, accessories and African violet used. However, when allowed, make a separate card to explain what you are trying to depict.

There are four classes in the container garden section ...

After the judges have made their decision and the show is open to the public, I like to stand around and listen to the comments of the public views of the design decisions. Most agree, but there is always a difference of opinion. Learn from the comments of the judges and next time, that Best in Class might be yours. Then take the container garden home and enjoy the design you have put together.



Photos 3 and 4 show container gardens I have entered.



Registration Report

By Joe Bruns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ Ernő Berkó — Ludányhalászi, Hungary

BE-Amira

- (11303) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Single-semidouble dark violet frilled pansy.
- Variegated dark green, pink and cream, plain, quilted, hairy, serrated/red back. •Standard.

BE-Ani

- (11304) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Semidouble pink ruffled pansy/variable thin white-green edge.
- Variegated medium green, pink and cream, quilted, serrated/red back. •Standard.

BE-Arabella

- (11305) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Single-semidouble lavender cupped pansy/purple band, green frilled edge.
- Variegated medium green and cream, pointed, quilted, ruffled. •Standard.

BE-Berill

- (11306) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Semidouble white and blue pansy/green edge.
- Variegated medium green and white, ovate, spooned, quilted. •Small standard.

BE-Csilla

- (11307) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Single-semidouble dark violet pansy/pale pink puff fantasy.
- Medium green, ovate, quilted, serrated.
- Small standard.

BE-Edina

- (11308) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Semidouble pale pink frilled pansy/raspberry glitter edge.
- Medium green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

BE-Eszter

- (11309) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Single-semidouble white cupped pansy/blue eye, streaks.
- Medium green, plain, serrated. •Semiminiature.

BE-Fiona

- (11310) 12/28/2020 •E. Berkó
- Semidouble white pansy/pale pink eye, green edge.
- Medium green, plain, quilted.
- Semiminiature.

■ Li Huang — Seattle, WA

Dew's Frosted Cranberry

- (11311) 01/23/2021 •L. Huang
- Double chimera white star/fuchsia stripe.
- Variegated dark green and cream, plain, pointed/red back. •Semiminiature.

Dew's Princess Lea

- (11312) 01/23/2021 •L. Huang
- Single chimera purple sticktite star/lavender stripe, purple ruffled edge.
- Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

■ Michaela Kroupová — Horní Bludovice, Czech Republic

Lina's Bell in Toulouse

- (11313) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Single pink two-tone bell/green ruffled edge.
- Medium green, quilted, serrated.
- Small standard.

Lina's Elizabeth

- (11314) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Single-semidouble bright pink star/white eye, fuchsia sparkle band, white ruffled edge
- Dark green, quilted, serrated. •Small standard.

Lina's Forest Fruit

- (11315) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Double pink wavy star/white eye, blue fantasy, raspberry fantasy band, white edge.
- Medium green, serrated. •Standard.

Lina's Glitter Fairy

- (11316) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Double pink two-tone ruffled star/purple fantasy band, green edge.
- Medium green, wavy, serrated. •Small standard.

Lina's Madame de Montespan

- (11317) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Semidouble-double bright pink wavy star/white eye, raspberry fantasy band, thin white edge.
- Medium green, quilted, serrated. •Standard.

Lina's Makrigialos

- (11318) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Semidouble-double chimera blue star/white stripe.
- Medium green, plain, hairy. •Small standard.

Lina's Milky Way

- (11319) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Single chimera fuchsia star/fuchsia ring around white eye, white puff fantasy, fuchsia ruffled edge.
- Medium green, plain. •Standard.

Lina's Spring Mood

- (11320) 01/23/2021 •M. Kroupová
- Semidouble-double pink two-tone ruffled star/darker streaks, raspberry fantasy, thin green edge.
- Variegated medium green and white, pointed, quilted. •Standard.

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from January 1, through February 28, 2021 Total: \$563

Booster Donations support AVSA ongoing general expenses.

■ \$50-\$99

Margaret Krygier, Steamwood, IL
Carolyn Lantz, Timberville, VA
Joyce Stork, Henderson, NV
In memory of Art and Mary Boland
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In memory of Bill Paaewe

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Megan St. George, Royal Oak, MI
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Charlotte Wolfe, Ann Arbor, MI



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Lucky Ducky

Exhibited by: Lorna Russell, 2008
Hybridized by: R. Robinson, 2004
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

B-Man's Etna

Exhibited by: Bruno Curcuruto, 2008
Hybridized by: B. Curcuruto



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Primulina 'Cynthia'

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams,
2008



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Unloading Show Plants

Beverley Williams' plants
ready to unload at the
2008 National Show

2021 Vacation Guide

These AVSA commercial members would be happy to have you visit them if you are able to travel in their area. They are listed here by state. Please carefully note the contact information, hours, and if visits are by appointment only. Enjoy the education and inspiration that visiting these businesses will afford you!

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At the time this guide is being assembled (March), New York state is closed to visitors. If you would like to visit The Violet Barn, please check in advance to see if it is open for visitors.

We carry African violets, gesneriads, begonias, terrarium plants and supplies.
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Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from January 1, 2021, through February 28, 2021 Total: \$122

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

■ \$50-\$99

Sue Haffner, Clovis, CA

■ Under \$25

Christopher J. Beney, Iowa City, IA

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Seeds That Make Small African Violets

By Ronn Nadeau Email: avseeds@yahoo.com

During the past 47 years, with help from my wife, Katsuko, and our expert pollinator, Kiyoko Tsumuraya, I have produced and sold African violet seeds. My seeds make the following types of African violets: standard, miniature, trailer, fantasy, and variegated.

Over the past 2 years, I have concentrated on improving our miniature category seeds. Toward that end, I stopped their production 8 months ago and let stocks run out.

I did that because my formerly sold “miniature” seeds produced mixtures of small (4- to 6-inch diameter), medium (6- to 10- inch) and large (greater than 10-inch) size plants in approximately equal proportions. My goal now is to produce seeds that make 100 percent small plants!



Plant stands with labeled crosses.

If you pick two of your standard African violet varieties and try to hybridize them, I think your chances of obtaining viable seeds are medium to low. If you do the same with two mini varieties, your chances are practically zero.

In my opinion, that is because human-made African violet varieties survive through vegetative, not sexual, propagation. Thus, their genomes need not

concern themselves with fertility and sterility; they have us to take care of their multiplying via cloning.

Human-made African violet varieties survive through vegetative, not sexual, propagation.

Breeder Finders

Only a small percentage of mini African violet varieties can form seeds when tested with pollen known to be viable, or at least that has been my experience. To help find those few that make good seeds, I use what I call a “breeder finder.” The breeder finder is a variety that has demonstrated its pollen is extraordinarily successful at fertilizing African violet flowers, whenever it is possible for that to happen. I give that plant the hybridizing name of SAK.

Explaining further, when I have a new mini variety to hybridize, I use the SAK pollen for the initial pollination. I apply it to several stigmas of the plant being tested. If SAK pollen does not cause pods to begin forming within 8 to 12 days, or if the pods are exceedingly small, I conclude the variety is sterile.

If pods form, that is a good sign. Unfortunately, however, such a result is not definitive because the mature pod might contain mostly small, fluffy “seeds” that do not germinate. In such cases the hybridizer learns that his or her efforts were expended on a plant that was sterile.



Large seed pods on two mini crosses.

Mini-Standard Crosses

The mini seeds we once sold were made in crosses of minis with standards. Some of the hundreds of minis produced by those crosses were found fertile by testing with SAK. Some of them have large pods (see photos), and I hope the seeds from those pods will produce a high percentage of mini African violets. In around a month, harvesting those pods will begin, followed by sowing the seeds.

About 5 to 6 months later, I will begin seeing the qualities and characteristics of the new plants. Will they be small and if so, in a high percentage? If they satisfy my goals, the batch of seeds they came from will be packeted and offered to the public. I will stay with the search for true mini seeds until I succeed.



Close-ups of seedlings from mini crosses.

More Fun with Design

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

Design Schedule

Editor's note: In the March/April issue of AVM (page 42), Karyn contributed an article loaded with design tips. Here are a few more photos and tips just in time for the Cyber Convention. All photos by Karyn Cichocki.

Creativity comes into play when interpreting design descriptions. Be sure to follow the show schedule and avoid "over-accessorizing." In Photo 1, the class was "Reese's Pieces," which was to be staged on a round circle. I chose the colors of the paper backdrop and used pinking shears to cut the paper to mimic the color and edges of the candy. I glued the plastic cap tops to the circle and attached the line material (anemone flower stems) to the caps so that the design was three-dimensional.



Photo 1. "Reese's Pieces"

Photo 2 shows a freestanding arrangement I entered at the New York State African Violet Society convention. The class was titled "Awards Banquet," and the schedule required the exhibitor to interpret the theme with a food that represented one you might find at a banquet. Several exhibitors entered cakes, and I chose to create a plate of sushi. The chopsticks were accessory enough; the soy sauce packet was not necessary.



Photo 2. Freestanding arrangement with "Awards Banquet" theme.



Photo 3. A holiday arrangement titled "Boxing Day."

The third photo is a plant arrangement staged on a wooden block. The designer was to choose a holiday and I chose to interpret “Boxing Day.” I staged the design in a small, decorated box to match the theme of the design and the origination of the holiday. The metal twirls are a find from my husband’s garbage pile. The leftover pieces from cut aluminum represent confetti.

Plant and Material Arrangement

Design also requires a little bit of artistic knowledge, such as use of negative space, plus some engineering. Photo 4 shows a plant arrangement by Mel Grice. Mel chose a clever way to interpret the arrangement titled “Attachment.” He created two designs at different heights and attached them with line material. Remember, negative space is just as important as filled space.



Photo 4. “Attachment” by Mel Grice.

In Photo 5, a flower arrangement from the Cherry Hill convention is titled “Mummer’s Parade.” This was a suspended design and I fixated on the flash of the Mummers and using shiny plastic cloth, but this design has everything but the kitchen sink in it. I usually don’t do such busy designs. The metal ring hangs from two threads at the back and two at the front. I use a thread color that blends with the background.

Photo 6 shows a black and white flower arrangement titled “Batman.” This one shows how to use paper and color. I spray-painted one of the white flowers black. I placed a stick in a weighted cup pin holder and then attached pieces of black and white paper to cover both the stick and holder.



Photo 5. “Mummers Parade” flower arrangement.



Photo 6. “Batman” flower arrangement.

What Is the AVSA Legacy Society and How Do I Become A Member?

By Linda Hall Phone: 816-550-4061

Email: llhall@grm.net

The AVSA Legacy Society was formed in 2008, just 2 years after the Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund was created. The Tinari fund was formed for the purpose of ensuring the long-term financial stability of the AVSA. The endowment will provide a stream of income restricted to support and enhance the operations of AVSA. The initial goal for the Tinari Fund was \$500,000. At the present time, the balance in the fund is more than \$335,000.

The Legacy Society's purpose is to request your gifts to the Tinari Fund to reach and exceed the goal of \$500,000. Gifts can come from individuals, clubs or businesses. All donations become part of the fund, which is invested under the direction of the AVSA Finance Committee in secure investments for the benefit of AVSA.

This goal may be reached by bequests through either your will, in a specific dollar amount, or through a percentage of your estate. You also can make a bequest by naming the Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund of the African Violet Society of

America as beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a specific dollar amount from that policy. This is as simple as calling your agent. The Legacy Society requires a minimum bequest of \$1,000 or more to the Tinari Endowment Fund to become a member.

The current members of the Legacy Society are:

Douglas and Lynn Allen	Sue Hoffmann
Carolee Carter	Terry Klemesrud
Judy Carter	Anne Nicholas
Randy G. Deutsch	Terri Post
Margaret Farrand	Sue Ramser
Dolores Gibbs	Leonard Re
Linda Hall	Janet Riemer
Nancy Hayes	Joyce Stork

This Society is near and dear to my heart. If you wish to become a member and need more information, please contact me by phone, email or text to the above number. I would love to talk to you and let you know what a difference you can make for our beloved AVSA and its future.

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Best Varieties Voting Opens

By Trudy Brekel Email: violetlady7@msn.com

It's that time of year again, time to vote for your favorite African violets! The AVSA Best Varieties List for 2021 needs your input. We would like to have your opinion on which plants you would like to see on the list. We will include all nominations submitted by July 31, 2021. The Best Varieties report will appear in the November/December issue of *African Violet Magazine*.

There are several ways to vote:

Vote online at: www.africanvioletsofamerica.org/best-variety-voting. Enter your name and the five varieties that are your favorites. At the bottom, you just click on the Submit button — it's that easy. You also can navigate to the Member Content page of the website, where you will find links both to the

online voting page and a printable form you can mail to me at: Trudy Brekel, 5553 W. Prentice Cir., Littleton, CO 80123.

The AVSA Best Varieties
List for 2021 needs
your input.

If you prefer to email the names of your five favorite varieties, send the message to me at: violetlady7@msn.com.

Be sure to participate and get your vote in by July 31.

In Memory

Gary Thurman

Another member of AVSA has passed away. Gary Thurman of Houston, Texas, passed away August 20, 2020, after a short battle with Alzheimer's disease. Gary moved to North Carolina to be near his niece and nephews in his final year. His family was with him through Facetime when he passed from this world.

Gary was a knowledgeable and avid grower of gesneriads. He was drawn into the violet world through his wife, Rhona, whom he lost in 2017. Until the end Gary was an active member of Spring Branch African Violet Club in Houston, the Lone Star African Violet Council and the African Violet Society of America.

Contest Entry —

Emotional Therapy with African Violets

By Frank Tropea Somerville, Massachusetts

While I write this article, we are in the midst of a harsh New England winter. With naturally dark days, one can get depressed easily. However, whenever I feel the darkness pervading my psyche, I just look at several of my blooming African violet plants. They, if I may say so myself, are grandly beautiful. One in particular, a multi-petaled pink rosette one with specks of other colors named Angelique, is especially beautiful and has a lot of flowers.

I'm seriously thinking of showing Angelique whenever the coronavirus pandemic is ended and the Bay State African Violet Society inevitably gets back together for its shows again. Of course, I'm still a novice and amateur grower. I only propagate by leaf cuttings, etc., and I have no overwhelming ambitions to become a renowned breeder. However, not to brag, but some of my flowering plants look very much like some of the show winners in the *African Violet Magazine*.

Good Soil and Fertilizer

I've been using a special fertilizer called ArgoThrive. It doesn't smell too nice since it's partly created by fish parts and fermented grains. However, my plants really seem to like it and do well. I give my plants plenty of light, both artificial and sunlight, and spray them well with a mild mixture of ArgoThrive in warm water three times a day. And because it's all organic, spraying it on the plants doesn't seem to discolor the leaves. With root feeding, it also adds beneficial bacteria to the soil.

I also give my plants great "soilless soil" from Heidi Dillenbeck of Enchanted Gardens fame. Most of the violets in my collection come from Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses and many are beautifully flowered Russian varieties. Possibly, foolishly, I ordered some more from Lyndon Lyons.

When dark clouds
pervade my mind, their
astonishing beauty
breaks through ...

Outside of possibly getting a few ribbons at the eventual shows, I do not plan to be a prize breeder. If I have too many plants, I'll give some away to other friends and family of mine who are African violet hobbyists or who just like the plants. I have considered, if I win a few ribbons, possibly going to the classes for judging but we'll just see what the future holds for me and my plants.

Sharing the Emotional Therapy

I do, as I'm sure you all do too, just derive a great deal of pleasure from tending and nurturing these very beautiful African violets. When dark clouds pervade my mind, their astonishing beauty breaks through the emotional darkness and makes me feel immensely better.

This is also why, when COVID is no longer a threat to activities of African violet hobbyists, I want to share my collection and joy from these plants, especially some of the new varieties I purchased from Lyndon Lyons. All of us who have too many violets should consider giving some to people living in psychiatric hospitals, jails or medical hospitals to cheer them up. It helps to accompany the gifts with easy instructions on how to raise these beautiful plants, which are show-stopping gorgeous!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lyon's Monique

Exhibited by: Jean Melnechuk, 2009

Hybridized by: S. Sorano

Standard

Notice of Proposed Amendments To AVSA Bylaws

Notice is hereby given that the following proposed amendments to AVSA Bylaws, Articles IV, V and X will be voted on at the AVSA 2021 Virtual Annual Convention.

Article IV **Officers and Their Duties** **Section I**

■ **Elected Officers**

It is proposed to insert in the first line of the opening paragraph, after the word “shall,” the following words: “*be members of AVSA in good standing and ...*”

First paragraph currently reads:

“The elected officers of this Society shall fulfill the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority of the Society. The elected officers of this Society shall be:”

If adopted, Article IV, Officers and Their Duties, Section 1, first paragraph under the heading “Elected Officers” would read:

“The elected officers of this Society shall *be members of AVSA in good standing and* shall fulfill the duties prescribed by these bylaws and by the parliamentary authority of the Society. The elected officers of this Society shall be:”

Section 2

■ **Regional Directors**

It is proposed to add the following new paragraph 1:

“All Directors shall be members in good standing of AVSA.”

Article V **Nomination and Elections** **Section I**

■ **Eligibility**

It is proposed to amend by striking out paragraphs 1 and 2 and replacing with the language below.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 currently read:

1. To be eligible to be an elected officer in the Society, a nominee shall be a member in good standing and have served at least two (2) years as a member of the Board of Directors.
2. To be eligible to be a Director, a nominee shall have shown outstanding leadership in African violet related activities.

If adopted, Article V, Nomination and Elections, Section 1, Eligibility, paragraphs 1 and 2 would read:

1. *To be eligible to be an elected officer in the Society, a nominee shall be a member of AVSA in good standing and must have completed two (2) years of service on the Board of Directors.*
2. *To be eligible to be a Director, a nominee shall be a member of AVSA in good standing and have shown outstanding leadership in African violet related activities.*

Article X **Committees** **Section I**

■ **Standing Committees**

It is proposed to create the following new committees with the stated responsibilities:

8. **Fundraising:** shall assist with research and recommend funding solutions for various funds, fund drives as needed, other income opportunity programs, and solicitation of contributions, grants and other donation opportunities.
10. **Marketing:** shall develop and organize a Marketing Plan for AVSA to enhance the visibility and reputation of AVSA and shall guide AVSA, notably the website team, committees, and affiliate chapters, in creating a unified vision, mission, look and feel of AVSA.

- 17. Website:** shall be responsible for coordinating and implementing the functions associated with maintenance of the AVSA website.

It is proposed to amend paragraph 12 by striking from the responsibilities “the AVM and other.” Paragraph **12** currently reads:

- 12. Publications:** shall be responsible for the publication of the **AVM** and other **AVSA** literature that the **AVSA** Board shall authorize.

If adopted, paragraph 12 (which will be renumbered to paragraph 14) will read:

- 14. Publications:** shall be responsible for the publication of **AVSA** literature that the **AVSA** Board shall authorize.

Article X

Committees

Section 2

■ **Special Committees**

It is proposed to add the following as the first paragraph:

“All members of Standing and Special Committees shall be members of AVSA in good Standing.”

Rationale: The purpose of the proposed amendments is for clarification and consistency. Adding the new committees to the Bylaws is simply to formalize what we’re already doing.

Mary Lou Harden, Chair, AVSA Bylaws Committee
Sue Ramser
Ruth Goeke
Bob Green



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AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: affiliate@avsa.org

By now you have probably looked at the new AVSA website and found your club. When you check your club's information to confirm that all of the information was correctly brought over from the old website, take a minute to check at the bottom of your club's information for the "update" date. If that date is more than 2 years old, it's time to do an update.

To get to the "Update Affiliate Club Information" form, click on "Participate" on the Home page. Select "Find an Affiliate Club" from the dropdown menu. You will now see the "Update Affiliate Club Information" button. The update form now has a different format than before, but works in the same way. If all of your club information is the same, you can just send an email to affiliate@avsa.org.

Several clubs that are only having virtual meetings at this time are updating their club information to let people know who to contact if they want to attend the virtual meetings. After things return to normal they will send in another update to enter their meeting location and times. It's always a good idea to keep your club information up to date.

Once meetings resume, many clubs stop having meetings in the summer, but it's too easy for members to drop out over the summer and not return in the fall. If you keep meeting through the summer you have a better chance of keeping your members. The summer meetings can be more casual, with no club business so vacationers don't miss any club news.

Generally, the summer meetings can have an activity not necessarily violet related: get together for lunch, or visit a botanical garden or a nice nursery. It's just a fun way to keep your group together.

The NASA Area
African Violet Society
was disbanded, but is
active again.

Have you ever belonged to a club that disbanded? Well, take heart; all is hopefully not lost. The NASA Area African Violet Society is an example of a club that was disbanded for several years before a few former members decided to work on regrouping. The NASA Area African Violet Society in Texas is now active once again.

We have a list of members working to start a club:

- Vikki Bierley: Evansville, IN;
Email: vicki0323@aol.com
- Mary Ann Markey: Port Charlotte, FL;
Email: drmaogrady@gmail.com
- Laura Carpenter: Lancaster, CA;
Phone: 661-940-3990
- Cherie Przymus: Cheyenne, WY;
Email: clprzy@gmail.com
- Joanne Daane: Ashland, OR;
Email: jorose12@yahoo.com

Hopefully, someone will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact the Affiliate Chair for help.

There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.

Graphics for Affiliates

By Joyce Stork, AVSA Marketing Chair

Phone: 402-719-6896 Email: marketing@avsa.org

Tell the world about AVSA on your Affiliate website or Facebook page using AVSA graphic designs or ads!

The graphics shown here were created for AVSA affiliate use by Roxanne Clapp (<https://roxc.graphics/>). She serves as AVSA's volunteer graphic designer and is willing to assist clubs too. If your club needs a new logo, or has a special project, contact Roxanne (phone 813-991-1860 Roxanne@roxc.graphics), and mention AVSA, to receive a very reasonable rate for her work.



Affiliates can use this "Join AVSA" graphic to promote their local clubs.

To access the graphics shown here for your club use, simply request the graphic(s) you wish to use from the Marketing Committee (marketing@avsa.org). It is helpful to specify the location (Facebook, website, brochure, etc.) where you plan to use the graphic so that we can provide the correct size of image.



AFFILIATED CHAPTER



AFFILIATED
REGIONAL GROUP



Affiliates can use this "Join AVSA" graphic to promote their local clubs.

AVSA Affiliates also can request to use photos of violets seen in the Photo Gallery on the new AVSA website. Contact the Marketing Committee (marketing@avsa.org) and specify which photographs you need using the name that appears when you hover over the website image.

Normally, we provide the graphics or images within a day or two of the receipt of your request.



Contact the AVSA Marketing Committee to reuse photos displayed in our online gallery.

Note: AVSA graphics and images can only be used by AVSA Affiliate clubs by permission and so long as club dues remain current. The graphics should not be altered in any way, including by cropping, stretching, or changing the color.

Contest Entry —

Confessions of an African Violet Assassin

By Rich Follett Strasburg, Virginia

In this vast, wide world, African violet enthusiasts are a small and close-knit community. We share our joys and sorrows quickly across borders, cultures, and lifestyles. We tend to learn our lessons with and from each other.

Because of this dynamic, the loss of my entire collection 10 years ago to impatiens necrotic spot virus (INSV) is public knowledge. I was devastated when it happened, and deeply touched when dozens of fellow African violet lovers offered to share leaves and plants to help me get my collection back up and running 8 years later when I got the courage to try again.

There can be no doubt: African violet lovers are kind and generous by nature. We stick together when the going gets tough!

My (Plant) Life of Crime

Given the generally transparent nature of African violet community relations, what I have to say next might come as a bit of a surprise: *I was a confirmed African violet assassin before INSV ever came into my world.* Oh, it's true that I lost nearly 2,000 plants to INSV in one fell swoop, but it is also true that the number of plants and varieties I have killed in my time as an African violet grower is easily triple the number I lost when INSV hit. INSV was just the last straw in a long line of death sentences for African violets taken into my care!

Before you judge me too harshly, please note that I have never in my life adopted, purchased or propagated an African violet with premeditated murder in mind. Life is just life, we all have our struggles and, sadly, my poor violets have tended to pay the price. I am choosing to reveal my life of crime in the hope that it will be both a reassurance and a cautionary tale for fellow African violet enthusiasts.

I was a confirmed
African violet assassin
before INSV ...

Common "Criminal" Scenarios

The circumstances are legion; in the interest of brevity, I will discuss only those factors that are most likely to apply to growers everywhere. If you see yourself in any of these scenarios, I hope that you will take heart and forgive yourself, as I have learned to do.

•**Being overeager.** When African violets became commonly available on eBay and in other online forums, I took on too many too fast and exceeded my resources of time and space. Approximately nine out of every 10 now are dead, and many of those that lived were so stressed that they sported.

•**Overestimating the ability to care for plants properly.** Be it because of time, energy, changing economic conditions, illness, or just burnout, I fell short of my own expectations more often than not and many plants died as a result. One universally acknowledged trait of African violets is that they need consistent culture to thrive.

None of my plants have ever had consistent culture. I tried to compensate by growing hundreds, or even thousands, of plants at a time under the assumption that the law of averages would dictate that some would be in bloom when it suited my purpose.

•**Depression.** Like many intelligent, creative people, I struggle with depression. Rarely, if ever, do I take on additional African violets when I am at a low point. When I am on a high bend in the curve, though, watch out! Online auction sites exacerbate this dynamic. I

often have felt like one particular auction might be my only chance to acquire a variety on my “must-have” list. Even for those who do not deal with depression, the adrenaline rush can be compelling.

•**Overpropagating to share or to preserve hard-to-find cultivars.** I have always put down three or four leaves of every variety that I acquire, be it to share later or to preserve the hybrid in case my original specimen goes down. Never — and I repeat, *never* — have I accurately estimated the time and energy it would take me to separate, pot up, grow, pack, and ship all those African violet progeny. Propagation can be an African violet assassin crash course!

•**Lifestyle disconnect.** I am the youngest person in my circle of friends. My wife is retired. Almost all my friends are retired. Most of my African violet friends are retired. I am *not*. If I could just get it into my head that my time restrictions are different from those of almost everyone else in my circle, more of my African violets might live.

Retirement isn't the only factor, either. It all comes down to one's personal nature. “On-the-go” types often don't do well with the more monotonous and sedentary aspects of African violet culture (such as repotting, separating babies, etc.). Know yourself so your African violets may live!

•**Apathy.** When things aren't going well in the plant room or on the windowsill, it is easy to become overwhelmed and, hence, apathetic. In my case, the plant room is downstairs in the unfinished storage area of our basement, completely out of sight and out of my daily living space. Sadly, out of sight really can mean out of mind.

I often have missed weekly watering and then, afraid to see the damage that has surely resulted, I spend another week building up the courage to go downstairs and see what my neglect hath wrought. It is a vicious cycle.

The fact that the damage, once seen, is never as bad as I might have imagined does little to prevent the cycle from repeating. If I could grow African violets in the part of my house in which I actually *live*, I certainly would, but that is not the case (my wife and I live in a one-bedroom condo) and I would rather

grow them somewhere I have to trek to get to than not grow them at all.

Sadly, out of sight
really can mean out
of mind.

The real problem is that I never seem to be able to learn from the curve. Result: the assassin strikes again!

•**Lack of real-time contact with other growers.**

Apart from the six intrepid novice growers with whom I was meeting once monthly prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are virtually no African violet enthusiasts or clubs in my geographical area, with the closest active group being a 2-hour drive away. It is difficult to stay motivated and on track with such a limited sense of community. Once again, the plants suffer the consequences.

Caring for the Living

I am sure that all of you who read the *AVM* will be able to identify many other factors that might contribute to one earning African violet assassin status. I have offered just a few here, culled from my own experience.

I have figured out that the only way I can appease the ghosts of the deceased is by improving my record of caring for the living. I have filled my African violet room and refrigerator with Post-it notes of encouragement and reminders for improved care and culture.

Perhaps, in time, I will be able to turn in my “African violet Assassins” union card. At least, for the moment, my conscience is clear.

Senior Judges: Important Notice

By Barbara Werness

Phone: 763-754-3918 Email: seniorjudges@avsa.org

Senior Judges may apply for a renewal examination between May 1 and September 1, 2021. Please refer any questions regarding the Senior Judge examination to Barbara Werness.

The examination request form can be obtained on the AVSA web site in the Shows and Judges section under Member Content. The form includes instructions for the \$5 fee payment. Proof of three blue ribbons as per the AVSA Handbook, 2016 edition, page 83, should be sent with the form. (Proof of three blue ribbons is waived for the 2021 examination.)

You may receive the examination by email as a Microsoft Word document. If not received, follow up within 2 weeks. If you require a hard copy by postal mail, allow up to 3 weeks for delivery. Please specify whether you want the exam by email or as a hard copy.

A printed hard copy (not email) of the exam must be returned to Barbara Werness by October 1, 2021, for grading.

Advanced Judges who meet the requirements and wish to apply for their first Senior Judge examination

can use the same request form; but also need to send the following items of documentation of eligibility per AVSA Handbook, Page 85: This information is to be sent via postal mail to: Barbara Werness, 12354 Naples Street NE, Blaine, MN 55449.

1. List of all judging schools attended, grades, etc.
2. Signed schedules of five AVSA shows judged (copy of signed title page with all show information is sufficient.)
3. Verification of three blue ribbons earned per AVSA Handbook, 2016 Edition, Page 83.

(Proof of three blue ribbons is waived and only three signed schedules are required for the 2021 examination.)

Apply by September 1, 2021. Applications postmarked after September 1, 2021, will be returned and application may be made next year.

Please include email address and you will be notified when your exam is received. No exams will be returned until after October 15, 2021.

Correction

In the March-April 2021 issue of *AVM*, on page 9, NK-Klubnichiyi-Kapekeik, exhibited by Carol Semrau, was incorrectly identified as a standard. It is a semiminiature plant.

NK-Klubnichiyi-Kapekeik
Exhibited by Carol Semrau
Semiminiature

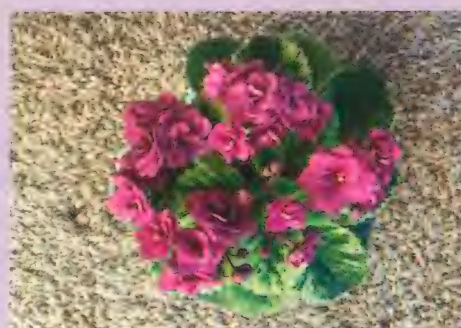




Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Foxwood Trail

Exhibited by: Bill Price
 Hybridized by: T. Khoe, 1986
 Best Trailer, 2007
 Semiminiature Trailer



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rob's Hallucination

Exhibited by: Beverley Williams,
 2008
 Hybridized by: R. Robinson,
 1996
 Semiminiature

Violet Preservation Committee Update

By Rich Follett Strasburg, Virginia

In January of this year, Mary Thompson succeeded Candace Baldwin as the chair of the Violet Preservation Committee. The members of the committee, along with all of AVSA, are grateful for Candace's dedicated leadership. Since that transition, the committee has begun three projects, which we are excited to share.

First, in keeping with the committee's mission, a name change has been submitted for AVSA Board approval. The proposed name for the newly reorganized committee is the Vintage Violet Preservation Committee. This initiative is based on a desire to focus the committee's energy where it is needed most — to help preserve the vintage African violet varieties we have grown and loved for so long. As of this writing, we still are awaiting Board approval.

The second project is to bring back the "AV Most Wanted" feature in the *AVM* (see next page). Readers may remember that this popular column was maintained for many years by the late Barbara Elkin, whose service was invaluable to the AVSA and its members. This newly restored feature will appear first in the *AVM* and later, as time and resources permit, on the AVSA website. Those searching for a vintage variety should send an e-mail with their requests to: preservingviolets@avsa.org, along with their name, address, preferred email address, and phone number.

Lastly (and perhaps most exciting of all), Committee Chair Mary Thompson will be instituting a spring and fall vintage African violet round robin trade! The details on the Round Robin appear below. Please plan to join us for the fun!

Vintage Violet Round Robin

By Mary Thompson and Rich Follett

Mary Thompson and the Violet Preservation Committee are proud to announce an African Violet Round Robin trade to be held twice yearly, in May and October. AVSA members in good standing are encouraged to participate. Round Robin details follow.

As you probably know, a vintage violet is one that has a DOB (date of birth) that is 25 years old or older. Most are registered, and their birthdate (date of registration) can be found in a software program

called First Class for All, which can be ordered from the AVSA store (Africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/shop/).

How a Round Robin Works

A round robin works by several people signing up to provide and receive violet leaves. Person No. 1 packs a box with leaves and mails it to the second person on the list. Person No. 2 takes the leaves they want and replaces those with some of their

own healthy leaves so the box holds the same amount the participant received, if not more. They then mail the box to person No. 3. The last person in the round robin mails the box back to person No. 1.

Round Robin Goals

We are especially looking to share rare and hard-to-find violets. The goal is to get these into circulation so we don't lose them forever.

Plenty of hybridizers introduced their plants more than 25 years ago, including Tinari, Pittman, Eyedom, Champion, and Volkman, to name a few. We encourage including these in the exchange.

We anticipate starting this activity as soon as the weather gets warm enough; however, weather is a factor any time we are mailing across the country

and that must be taken into consideration, even if it cannot always be foreseen.

We are especially
looking to share rare
and hard-to-find
violets.

To sign up for the round robin, email: znailady@gmail.com. Include your name, mailing address, email and phone number. Only your mailing address will be shared in the mailing list that passes to the group.

Vintage Violets Most Wanted List

By Mary Thompson, Chair, Violet Preservation Committee

P.O. Box 203, Paso Robles, CA 93447
preservingviolets@avsa.org

The Violet Preservation committee is up and running. AVSA has had a busy year. The organization has spent much of the year getting the new website online and now the Violet Preservation Committee is ready to help those looking for vintage violets.

We have quite the list. If you have one of these violets, email: preservingviolets@avsa.org with your contact information so we can pass it on to the person looking for that violet.

AVSA's Most Wanted:

Admiral	Lilian Jarrett Supreme	Optimara Marilyn II
Amethyst	(Supreme only)	Optimara Molokai
Ann	Maas' Janet	Picasso
Bagdad	Maas' Sashah	Pink Beauty (F. Brockner)
Blue Boy	Maple Sugar	Sailor Boy
Blue Girl	Mermaid	Tooch
Commodore	Nancy Leigh	Viking
Creekside Moonbeams	Neptune	White Lady (P. Ruggeri)
Friend Phyllis	Number 32	White Pride Supreme
Granger's Wonderland	Norseman	(Supreme only)
Leawala	Optimara Marilyn	



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

"Arizona Byways"

Design: Flower Arrangement
Exhibited by: Pat Sutton, 2008



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert

Exhibited by: Bill Price, 2007



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

***Streptocarpus*
'Cape Beauties'**

Exhibited by: Nelly Levine, 2007

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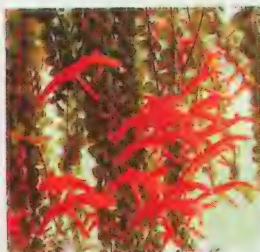
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■ African Violet Magazine

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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 74 Number 4

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Hybridized by: H. Pittman

Miniature

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African Violet Society of America

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President's Message

By Susan Anderson

4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, Arizona

Email: president@avsa.org

As I reflect on 75 years of AVSA history, I am impressed and inspired by our previous leadership that so skillfully guided our society to today. It is my mission to develop a strategy for AVSA's future and prioritize our efforts for sustainability. And I invite you to share your ideas and suggestions as well. Together, we will build the future we want for AVSA.

Successful Cyber Convention

I hope you had a chance to participate in the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention, celebrating AVSA's 75th Anniversary. Knowing an in-person event would not be possible, a dedicated group of volunteers stepped up to the challenge and created another online experience for our members to enjoy. The Cyber Convention included almost everything you would expect of the annual convention, just in digital format.

Educational programs and tours consisted of pre-recorded videos by experts in their fields. Beautiful new introductions of African violets and other gesneriads were featured in photo galleries. The Cyber Showroom presented another outstanding gallery, showcasing the gorgeous plants and designs submitted by our members.

In the salesroom, virtual booths linked directly to vendors' websites and offered special deals for convention registrants. If you did not participate in the fun and games, you really missed out! There was a wide variety of live, interactive events for attendees. We had lots of opportunities to engage and practice our Zoom skills.

Adapting for the Future

This is a time of transition and AVSA is adapting to a changing environment. Because of this, AVSA members are becoming more skillful and capable in using available technology. I look forward to

implementing more modern features to streamline and improve efficiencies of many of our operations.

As AVSA adapts and prepares for the future, the Website, Marketing, and Fundraising committees have been converted from Special Committees to Standing Committees. The activities and responsibilities of these committees have become increasingly important to AVSA's sustainability and the AVSA Bylaws now reflect this change.

Time of Transition

There is also transition of AVSA staff. With this issue of the *AVM*, we bid fond farewell to our editor, Teresa Odle, as she retires to spend more time with her family, especially her new grandson. She has done an outstanding job and we will miss her dearly. Now, I am extremely pleased to welcome Sophia Bennett as the incoming editor. We are very excited to have her join the AVSA family. Sophia is new to growing violets, so please share your ideas and suggestions for article topics and photos. She is eager to learn and has jumped in with great enthusiasm.

I want to thank the retiring Board members for their service and welcome new Board members into the ranks. Congratulations to all the society award winners, too. Their contributions have been especially beneficial to AVSA.

Summer is here. It's time to repot and prepare for fall events. I hope you have plenty of potential show winners among your collection. As you are pruning and grooming, be sure to share some leaves and a few growing tips with others. It is the best way to spread our passion for African violets.

Happy Growing, Showing, and Sharing!



Editor's Notes

By Teresa Odle

Email: editor@avsa.org

This is the final issue celebrating AVSA's 75th Anniversary. I hope you were able to join the virtual celebration during the Cyber Convention a few weeks ago. Please enjoy the photo pages showing a selection of new introductions and cyber show entries; all registrants can enjoy the full selection on the AVSA website, if you haven't already. And see page 6 for a brief report on this successful online convention run by hard-working volunteers.

We also have some lengthy — but high-quality — articles to help members grow and show African violets. They include practical advice from experience and even experimenting. Topics cover lighting (page 46), fertilizer (page 10), and blossom propagation for chimeras (page 14). Stick with these great articles and you are sure to learn something.

This also is sadly my final issue as *AVM* editor as I begin to enjoy retirement and my just-born grandson. These past few years have been challenging for all of us, and I regret that I was unable to spend more time with AVSA members at conventions because of the pandemic. The regional and national conventions I attended were fun, educational and full of beautiful, healthy plants.

I have made many dear friends in the past few years and mourn those we have lost. I look forward to keeping in touch with many of you and to participating in the Albuquerque AVS, a group of fine and friendly African violet growers.

Since coming on board, I have enjoyed learning more about these diverse and beautiful plants. Most of all, I have been amazed while observing the unwavering devotion of the many AVSA members who volunteer so much of their time and talent to the Society. I also am pleased with the improvements we have made to the magazine over the years,

including the new design and new departments or columns.

I want to thank
everyone who
contributed to the
magazine over the
past three years.

There are too many AVSA champions and personal supporters to mention; I hope I have thanked you all adequately for your efforts and help. I would like to give a shout-out to Shirley Jones, our desktop publisher, who helped me immensely when I came on board. Shirley works behind the scenes, but she approaches the job with absolute dedication and an always-positive attitude.

I also want to thank everyone who contributed to the magazine over the past three years. I have been so impressed with your creativity and skills, and your willingness to give of your time and share your ideas. I'd like to thank all *AVM* advertisers, and I hope readers will take time to look at and visit the vendors' websites. (Remember, you can click on the ads in the digital version of this issue to go directly to their sites or contact information).

I wish AVSA and all of you the best and hope you can get together in Little Rock next year for a full in-person celebration. Enjoy the rest of your summer!



Incoming Editor's Notes

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

It's my great pleasure to introduce myself as the new editor of *African Violet Magazine*. I've always had tremendous fondness for these gorgeous flowers. As a child, I lived across the street from my maternal grandmother (who lived to be 102!). She kept a collection of orchids and African violets in the sunny window of her dining room — which was the happiest room in the house thanks to her amazing cooking. I was always intrigued by the shimmery surface of those violets. When she moved to a retirement community, I got to take one of those plants home with me. It sat in my kitchen window for years, a constant reminder of her gentle presence and enviable green thumb.

When I started my career as a writer, one of my first jobs was contributing to the home and garden section of my local newspaper. I loved writing about

new plant varieties, landscapes and people's relationships with living things. That gig has long since ended, so it's a real treat to return to my roots (so to speak) and write about plants again. I know I'm going to learn so much from all of you.

To give you a few more details about me, I live in Eugene, Oregon, with my husband and 8-year-old twin daughters. When I'm not working, I enjoy cooking, wine tasting, quilting, running, and reading mystery novels. I have a small vegetable garden that I tend throughout the summer, and a window full of houseplants that we enjoy year-round.

I am very open to receiving your contributions to the magazine or hearing ideas for what you'd like to read about. Please feel free to reach out to me at any time with suggestions and questions.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1

- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

Please send articles for the *AVM* to the editor (editor@avsa.org).

AVSA Holds Successful Cyber Diamond Celebration

More than 270 African violet enthusiasts from the United States and several countries around the world gathered virtually for the AVSA Cyber Diamond Celebration held the week of May 31 through June 5. Those who registered met throughout the week to meet African violet hybridizers and *AVM* columnists and to celebrate 75 years of the Society. For example, 83 violet growers joined the first cocktail hour (via Zoom) on Monday evening with special guests Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, owners of The Violet Barn.

Participants had access to the Convention Salesroom, and could link on special offers from several AVSA Commercial Members. The New Introduction Gallery featured more than 275 new African violets and nearly 100 new other gesneriads.



"Diamonds Are Forever" Interpretive Flower Arrangement, exhibited by Cathy Willis, Ohio.

Show Entries

A total of 204 exhibits appeared in the Cyber Diamond Show. Of these, 137 pictured African violets, 48 other gesneriads, and 17 designs. The show included two special educational exhibits. Rob's Boolaroo was entered more than any other plant (six exhibits).

A total of 54 exhibitors from the United States and two other nations participated in the show, including four participants from Canada and one from Portugal. Exhibitors represented 34 AVSA Affiliate clubs. Mary Corondan offered "a heartfelt thank you to the exhibitors for entering such gorgeous plants and designs in the show."

Game Winners

Cocktail hours and committee meetings offered a chance for AVSA members to see each other on their screens. The committee added a little fun and chances to interact with a few games for attendees. Congratulations to Joan Santino, winner of the scavenger hunt, and Mary Jane DiLorenzo, Angela Comer, Alichia Warren, Mary Smith and Jacquie Eisenhut, Bingo winners.

Thanks

AVSA thanks Susan Anderson, 2021 Cyber Convention Chair, and Mary Corondan, 2021 Cyber Show Chair, for their leadership. A long list of volunteers helped Mary and Susan; they were recognized on the site, so please check the list and thank all members you know who donated time and talent to make the virtual meeting possible. "Greatest thanks to Candace Baldwin, Richard Craft, Joyce Stork, Louise Cheung, and Winston Goretsky for going way above and beyond," said Susan Anderson. This team built the website to host the convention.

AVSA also wants to thank all Commercial Members and hybridizers who participated in the convention.

Cyber Convention Show Photos



L to R: Roulette, Trudy Brekel, CO, standard; Tommie Lou, Candace Baldwin, AZ, standard; Mac's Misty Meadow, Penny Smith-Kerker, CO, semiminiature.



L to R: Wesley's Hoodoo Priestess, Linda Hall, MO, mini; Rob's Boolaroo, Sandra Skalski, NJ, trailer; S. clone *confusa* Mather E, Wilhelmina Allen, LA, species.



L to R: *Episcia* 'Alice's Aussie', LaDonna Hopson, VA, episcia; Jolly Pepper, Linda Sumski, MO, semimini; Arcturus, Pamela Orris, DE, standard.

AVSA Cyber Convention: New Introductions



L to R: Malu's Hard As Nails, hybridizer Margery Anderson-Clive (Nazare, Portugal), semiminiature; LiK-Vechernie Svechi, hybridizer Galina Lazarenko (Klin, Moscow region, Russia), standard; KZ-84-21, hybridizer Irina Zaikina (Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan), standard.



L to R: Texas Stardom, hybridizer Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses (Dolgeville, New York), standard; BR-Ogon' Prometeia, hybridizers Natalia and Sergey Burkatskaie (Lugansk, Ukraine), standard; NK-Chervonii-Mak, hybridizer Natalia Kozak (Odessa, Ukraine), semiminiature.



L to R: *Streptocarpus* 'DS-2422', hybridizer Pavel Enikeev (Dnepr, Ukraine); Kev's Pink Leopard, hybridizer Kevin Degner (Wisconsin), standard; RS-Kukolka, hybridizer Svetlana Repkina (Lugansk, Ukraine), standard.

AVSA Cyber Convention: New Introductions



L to R: Jere's Tie Dye Kiss, hybridizer Jere Trigg (Alabama), standard; Star Trio, hybridizer, Nina Starostenko (Moscow, Russia), semiminiature; Steffano's Early Frost, hybridizer Stephen Covolo (Springville, California), standard.



L to R: KT-Saliut Pobedy, hybridizer, Irina Kabanova and Elena Trofimenko (St. Petersburg, Russia), standard; NiK-Morskaia Serena, hybridizer Natalia Bulko, (St. Petersburg, Russia) standard; K's Simply Put, hybridizer Kathy Hajner (New Mexico), standard.



L to R: ND-Taina, hybridizer Natalia Danilova-Suvorova (St. Petersburg, Russia), standard; VaT-Kruzhevo Vetrov, hybridizer Tatiana Val'kova (Shakhtersk, Ukraine), standard; M. Bir Numara, hybridizer Doğan Uygün (Izmir, Turkey), miniature.

An Experiment with Four Fertilizers

By Kurt Jablonski Miami Beach, Florida

The 2020 pandemic blues were slow to set in but hit me like a ton of bricks rather quickly last year when I found myself — like many people around the world — forced to take a “staycation” from mid-March until October. The first few weeks at home felt like a much-needed break. I caught up on all my favorite shows, did my spring cleaning and repotted my entire African violet collection.

Cabin Fever Led to Poor Plant Care

Unfortunately, the novelty soon wore off and I found myself going stir-crazy from cabin fever. I never dreamed I'd be home as long as I was; it was truly a terrifying situation. The absolute worst part was finding out convention and all our other shows were cancelled. These events are always highlights of my year; I so look forward to exhibiting and seeing my violet family on these occasions. My motivation to care for my plants disappeared and I became depressed at the thought of having nothing to look forward to for another year or longer.

As a result, I slacked off on my daily care of show plants because I thought ... “I’ll do it tomorrow,” or “it’s ok if I wait to repot,” because there was no show coming up. I managed to throw water on my plants but on more than one occasion some of the leaves were so dry, they fell down around the pot from wilting. This really was unusual behavior for me. I am normally like a hawk watching my plants.

To stop from becoming a permanent part of the couch, in mid-April, I forced myself to get my act together and do some experiments that I had been wanting to try on my plants. Like many growers, I am always looking for ways to perfect my show plants. My principal experiment was with fertilizer. I was curious to determine whether different fertilizers really affect the color, size and shape of the blooms.

Experimenting With Fertilizers

I started the experiment with around 10 plants of Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler and seven different fertilizers. For the purpose of this article, I chose to focus on just four fertilizers. I selected this particular hybrid because it is one of my favorite African violets, and it is grown and shown all over the world. However, almost every time I see this Buckeye in a show, no two plants look the same. I wanted to find out why they all looked so different and what might be causing the differences.

I’ve spoken with Pat Hancock about this variety and we both feel that the culture of the plant plays a huge part, however, repeated propagation over the years from older outside leaves has deteriorated the strain. Finally, somewhere down the line, it is likely someone mislabeled another Buckeye as Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler.



Photo 1. Water reservoir marked with record of date and fertilizer used.

For the experiment, all the plants were in 4-inch pots and had bloomed once before to make sure they were true to the variety. For the fertilizers, I chose Peter’s 20-20-20, Jack’s Peat-Lite 15-16-17,

Dyna-Gro 7-9-5 and ferti•lome 20-20-20. I grow mostly variegated violets, which is why I chose balanced fertilizers for this experiment. I feel that this gives the variegates all the necessary nutrients in the desired quantities.

I wick-watered each plant on individual reservoirs and fertilized at 1/4 teaspoon fertilizer per gallon of reverse osmosis water. On the side of the reservoir, I wrote the date I began the experiment, along with the fertilizer (see Photo 1). All other factors such as soil, light, temperature and humidity were constant.

Results

My hypothesis was that each plant would indeed show differences in the size, color, variegation and texture of the leaves, as well as in the background color of the blossoms, the edge and the fantasy markings. Within 4 weeks, I began to notice the plants forming bloom stems and the emerging of new center leaves. At the beginning of May, it was clear that I would prove my hypothesis and each plant was going to exhibit unique growth patterns from the different fertilizers.

I was extremely excited to see how these plants would bloom and how the leaves would develop over the next few months as the plants got older. Even today, the experiment continues and no two of the Buckeye Cranberry Sparklers are identical.

As I expected, each plant bloomed differently, which is clear in the photos I have included with this article. Photo 2 shows the bloom of one plant fertilized with Peter's 20-20-20. The flower is a gorgeous semidouble pink, has a beautiful edge and lovely fantasy markings. Photo 3 is a close-up of the bloom on one plant that was fertilized with Jack's Peat-Lite Special 15-16-17. It is interesting



Photo 2. Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler blooms fertilized with Peter's 20-20-20. Photo 3. Close-up of Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler blooms after fertilizing with Jack's Peat-Lite Special 15-16-17.



Photo 4. Results after fertilizing Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler with Dyna-Gro 7-9-5. Photo 5. Bloom on Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler fertilized with ferti•lome 20-20-20.

because although this blossom has the edge and nice fantasy markings, it is a much lighter background color and does not have the extra middle petal.

Dyna-Gro 7-9-5 was used on the plant in Photo 4, and you can see that this blossom is lovely, but it does not show any of the fantasy markings that this cultivar usually displays. Finally, Photo 5 was fertilized with ferti•lome 20-20-20. The blossom is an almost solid red with only a few flecks of light pink. It appears that the dark color of the edge and fantasy overtook the lighter pink background color. Suffice it to say all the blossoms on the test plants are different.

After experimenting for more than a year, I have decided that the Peter's 20-20-20 works the best for my conditions. It is a balanced formula that has given my African violets beautiful flowers and dark green healthy foliage. I now feel confident in saying that fertilizer is the number one factor that determines how the plants will grow. You must choose a fertilizer that best suits your needs.

Final Thoughts

If you want one all-purpose fertilizer or several different formulas for different types of plants, that

is a personal preference. Mostly it depends on your schedule, size of the collection and your particular style of growing. As human beings, we change when we do not eat a balanced diet. We can become obese if we eat too many sweets or too skinny if we starve ourselves of the necessary nutrients needed to fuel our bodies.

Plants are no different, and if fertilized with either element in unbalanced amounts, they too will display differences in their growth habits. Now on to the next experiment!

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Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

S. 8 clone *rupicolus* 'Cha Simba'

Exhibited by: B.J. Ohme
Species

African Violet Blossom Stalk Propagation

By Paula Bal West Windsor, New Jersey

One of the most common methods of propagating African violets is from leaf cuttings. Because the genetic makeup is the same throughout the plant, the babies produced from leaf cuttings will be identical to the mother plant in most solid, bicolor and fantasy blossom plants. However, this is not true of African violet chimeras (pronounced ki-me-ra), as the individual plant cells of chimeras are genetically different. Because of this difference, leaf cuttings taken from chimeras are rarely identical to the plant from which the cutting was taken.



Image 1. The Alps I grow and its chimera blossoms.

Propagating Chimeras

Chimeras in the African violet world also are known as “pinwheel,” or striped blossom plants. In nature, a chimera is a mixture of tissue with a different genetic constitution in the same part of an organism that usually arises from a genetic mutation. In violets, this type of genetic mutation causes the stripe or pinwheel in blossoms.

The stripe colors are two entirely different genetic materials represented in one blossom. The genetic materials in these blossoms are twisted or fused together like a candy cane. These different genetic

materials are located in the flowers, crown and main stalk of an African violet chimera plant.

Since these pinwheel violets do not propagate true from leaf cuttings, there are several methods to propagate these plants to yield plantlets that will bloom true to the description of the mother plant:

- Suckers.** The baby plantlets that spontaneously appear at the base of an African violet are suckers. This does not happen often in most varieties of single-crowned plants. You can increase the chance of suckers forming by poking holes with a small pin at the base of the main stem or neck of the plant. The suckers will produce plants that will bloom true in approximately 9 to 12 months, depending on your growing conditions.

- Crowning.** Removing the center of the plant, also known as the crown, produces suckers from the center crown. Removing the crown sends the plant into “survival mode.” The mother plant will spend all its energy producing babies from the cut-out center. This is a fast way to propagate a chimera, however, the mother plant will never return to a single-crowned plant and then can only be used to propagate new plants.

The cut-out portion can be rooted if you carefully leave a portion of the main stem intact. For show growers, this is a disadvantage because a sucker and main crown cutting will take about one year to grow into a show plant. If using this method of crowning, remove only the center by carefully slicing through a portion of the main neck/stem of the plant and leave at least three to four leaves in the outer row. Place the entire beheaded plant in a Ziploc bag and wait until suckers form, then separate the plantlets into individual pots once they are large enough to handle.

- Blossom stalk propagation.** Since the two types of genetic material in chimeras are in the blossoms of the flower, you can use the blossom stalks to

propagate new plants without damaging the mother plant. This method is definitely more time-consuming. It takes an average of 4 to 6 months to produce small babies from the flower stalks and can take an additional 9 months to a year to produce flowers once the babies are potted up. This method requires more patience from the grower, but you might prefer it to destroying the original plant by crowning (especially if it is a single-crowned variety) or would like to continue to grow your plant for shows. This can also work for fantasy violets that do not propagate true from leaf cuttings consistently (such as Rebel's Splatter Kake).

bracts increase success rate in producing plantlets by blossom stem propagation. (I have tried leaving the blossom stalk on the plant using Keiki Grow Plus but have not had success in producing plantlets).

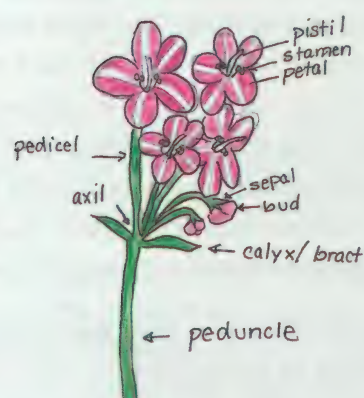
- Do not use pale, brown or soft bloom stalks. Try to use fresher stalks
- Use clean instruments, clean hands and/or gloves, clean pots and a clean medium (either soilless mix, a mix of perlite and vermiculite, or long fibered sphagnum moss).
- Adding Keiki Grow Plus is not necessary but can increase success rate. Use a tiny amount of this product; a little goes a long way. (Look for very small

quantities online, since it can be expensive and only has a 2-year shelf life). Keiki Grow contains a plant hormone, cytokinin, plus vitamins and lanolin. This product will increase plantlet production. Keiki Grow is most often used to produce baby plantlets on orchids.

Step-by-Step Blossom Stem Propagation

Step 1: Remove the entire flower stalk by pulling the stalk gently sideways. It will separate from the leaf axil (Image 3).

BLOSSOM STALK
FRONT VIEW



BLOSSOM STALK
BACK VIEW

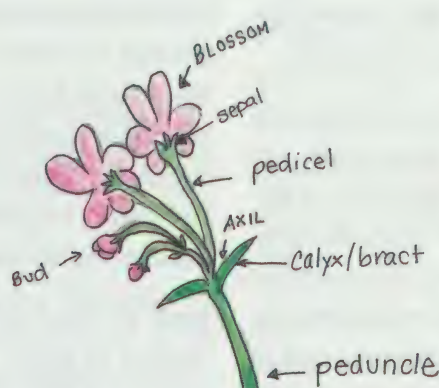


Image 2. My drawing of blossom anatomy, front and back.

Tips for Successful Blossom Stem Propagation

Here are some tips for making blossom stem propagation work for you:

- Many growers root blossom stalks directly in a peat-based mix or long-fibered sphagnum moss. However, in my experience, the blossom stalks rot before they produce plantlets.
- Rooting in water requires an extra step but increases the success rate in my growing conditions (under fluorescent lights, room temperature 70 to 75 degrees, 50 percent humidity) to a rate of 75 to 90 percent success. Dale Martens also has been using this method with similar success rates.
- Use a violet that has larger bracts or calyxes (see Image 2). To encourage larger bracts/calyxes, snip off the blossoms and buds while the blossom stalk remains on the mother plant for a few weeks to a month. This will encourage the calyxes to grow larger, getting energy from the mother plant. Larger



Image 3. Ness' Mini Sota, a semimini single chimera white sticktite pansy with a fuchsia stripe.

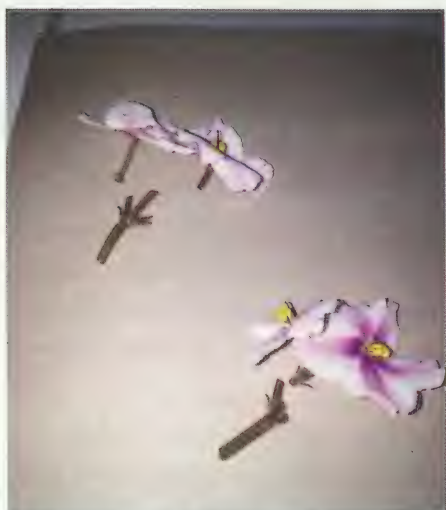


Image 4 (left). Cut the peduncle and pedicel. Image 5 (center). Stalks ready for propagating. Image 6 (right). Add a hormone preparation like Keiki Grow Plus.

Step 2: Using an X-Acto knife, cut the peduncle (below the bract/calyx) about 1 inch, if possible, and cut the pedicel about 1/4 to 1/2 inch above the bract/calyx. Throw away the blossoms (Image 4).

Step 3: Blossom stalks are ready for propagating (Image 5). Gently hold the peduncle of the stalk and use a small pin to poke a few shallow holes where the calyx/bract meets the pedicel on both sides. Be careful not to damage the bracts, just nick the surface. Dip the head of the same pin in Keiki Grow Plus or Pro (Image 6). Apply a tiny amount (about the size of the tip of the pin). Place the Keiki Grow over the hole you made in the calyx/pedicel node (Image 7).

Step 4: Purchase craft foam at an art supply store. You can use prefabricated cutouts or a large thin sheet of craft foam. It should be thin; thicker foam will not work as well. Cut a few small holes with an

X-Acto knife; the holes should be large enough to place the stalk through, but small enough that the stalk will not fall through the hole. The foam in the photos had precut holes. Foam should be large enough to float the stalks in water. The peduncle should be underwater, and the bracts should be on top of the foam, but not under the water. It is OK for the water to make contact with the bract, but it should not be completely submerged (Image 8).

Step 5: Label and date the foam with permanent marker or place a piece of electrical tape with the name and date written on the jar or container you prepare in step 6 (Image 9).

Step 6: Prepare a clean, sterilized jar or reservoir and fill it halfway with distilled water (Image 10). Alternately, you can use algae water, as Dale Martens does to root her blossom stems using the method above.



Image 7 (left). Add a tiny amount of Keiki Grow to the hole in the calyx/pedicel node. Image 8 (center). Thin foam from craft store. Image 9 (right). Labeled and dated foam.



Image 10 (left). Glass jar filled with distilled water. Image 11 (center and right). Photos by Dale Martens show how she places her blossom stalks in thin foam.

Dale has had success cutting a larger sheet of foam floating in a quart-sized plant reservoir filled with algae water with several stalks floating on the foam like a lily pad. (See Image 11).

Step 7: Gently place the bloom stalks through the holes in the foam so the calyx is touching the top of the foam and the peduncle is through the hole.

Step 8: Float the foam and blossom stalks in water. Cover the jar with plastic wrap, poke a few holes in the top of the wrap for air circulation and then place it under fluorescent lights until you see roots form. Make sure the plastic wrap does not touch the top of the blossom stalks (Image 12).

Step 9: Approximately 2 to 3 months later, you will see roots extending from the blossom stalk and you might even see tiny plantlets forming (Image 13). You can allow the plants to form baby plantlets in the

water, however, I find rooting them in soil at this stage has worked better in my conditions.

Prepare a clean 1- to 2-inch pot with drainage holes and feed a nylon/acrylic wick into the drainage holes through the pot (Image 14).

Put a 1/4- to 1/2- inch perlite layer in the bottom of the pot (referred to as Texas Style potting, Image 15).

Label and date the pot, fill the pot with soilless peat mix, mixed with 50 percent perlite or long-fibered sphagnum moss. Moisten the soil, but make sure it is not soaked (Image 16).

Step 10: Use a pencil to make a hole in the soil and plant the rooted stalk(s). Do not bury the stalk too deep; the calyx/bract node should be in line with the top of the soil line (Image 17).



Image 12 (left). Float the stalks in water. Image 13 (center and right). Roots forming on a plantlet in the water (left) and ready to place in soil (right).



Image 14 (left). Prepare a small pot and wick. Image 15 (center). Place a perlite layer in the bottom. Image 16 (right). Pot filled and moistened.

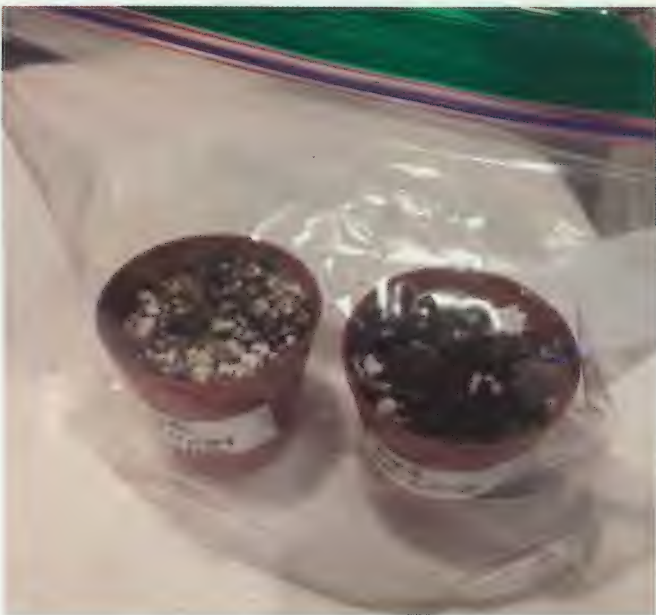


Image 17 (top left). Stalk lightly placed in pencil-made hole. Image 18 (bottom left). Pots sealed in plastic bag.

Images 19, 20. Plantlets forming at the calyxes/bracts.

Step 11: Place the pots in a Ziploc bag and fill the bag with air by blowing into it with a straw. Seal the bag, then place it under bright fluorescent lights (not in direct sun) (Image 18).

Approximately 1 to 2 months later, you will see a baby plantlet forming at one, possibly both calyxes/bracts. (Images 19 and 20).

Step 12: Prepare a small pot (1 to 2 inches) the same way as described in step 9 (labeled and dated). When the plantlet leaves are the size of a dime, remove them from the rooted stalk. Discard the stalk or try re-rooting it if it is still viable. Using your fingers, bent-nosed tweezers or an X-Acto knife, gently pry the baby plantlet from the calyx/axil node on the blossom stem.

Pot the individual plantlet(s) in the pot you prepared and place them in a Ziploc bag again. As the plantlet gets larger, incrementally repot. It will probably take 9 to 12 months to produce a flowering plant, but blossoms should be true to the plant description (Image 21).



Image 21. A thriving plantlet.

I hope you try blossom stem propagation to increase your chimera collection, share rare varieties with friends or create backups of prized chimeras in your collection. Happy growing!

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$45

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In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

If you followed the recommendation in the last issue to make some crosses between your plants, hopefully you have some seedpods to watch. The seedpods are the “fruit” of the African violet plant. The fruits are boring to watch; they stay green for 4 to 6 months and don’t change size much after the first couple of weeks. Instead of turning a bright color when ripe, they dry up and turn brown.

The fruits of African violets are not designed to attract animals, so there is no need to turn color or become soft and full of sugar to attract seed-eating animals that scatter the seed. The African violet fruit’s purpose is to protect the seeds until the next rainy season arrives. Ripening of the African violet fruit is signaled by drying up and becoming brown.

Many hybridizers remove the seedpods at this point and place them in a container in a warm environment to complete the drying process. After 2 to 3 weeks, the seedpods can be broken open and the seeds released for germinating. Each fruit or seedpod should contain 50 to 300 seeds, so don’t plant all of the seeds at once. If you are not ready to plant immediately, store dried fruits in a small vial with silica desiccant to prevent mold growth. Seeds can be stored in the dried fruit under these conditions for several months. If carefully dried and refrigerated, the seeds should remain viable for 2 to 3 years.

Q: In most animal breeding, it is a requirement to show the pedigree of the parents back for several generations. Some plant societies also require a pedigree when registering hybrids. Is there a reason why this is not the practice for African violets?

A: A quick answer to this question is that in its early history, the African Violet Society of America did not choose to require public pedigrees when registering

plants. Registration was a closed process between the hybridizer and the society. The registration application requested the parents of a new hybrid, but the information was not put in the public domain. Without that information, pedigrees did not take on the importance that they have in other organizations, such as with animal breeding.

Each fruit or seedpod
should contain 50 to
300 seeds...

Another factor that complicates the use of pedigrees in plant breeding is that hybridizers often used their own unnamed or unregistered hybrids when working toward a goal. This is a perfectly acceptable practice in plant breeding — the intermediate individuals are not the final product and might not be seen as worthy of registration. Putting these “undescribed” plants into a pedigree chart doesn’t convey useful information to outsiders, making the charts of very limited value to anyone but the hybridizer.

From the genetic point of view, I’ve always had a problem with the use of pedigree charts. The process that produces the sex cells through meiosis is designed to maximize the mixing of the genes being passed on to the next generation. After two generations, the amount of genetic information that was actually inherited from a grandparent (parent to F1 to F2 generations) might be calculated to be around 25 percent, but the value has a wide range. This is approximately 25 percent of all the traits that were in that grandparent — the good traits and the bad traits. In fact, the odds are significantly against the

F2 offspring inheriting any good traits from the grandparent. Sexual reproduction is designed to maximize the mixing of all the available traits, not concentrate the “good traits” into one offspring.

The only information I can see a pedigree chart providing is if an individual has a hidden recessive trait. If one of the parents had the recessive trait, then you can be nearly certain that the F1 offspring is heterozygous for the recessive trait. Crossing the F1 offspring to another individual that shows the recessive trait provides a high probability of getting the recessive trait back out in at least some of the next generation of offspring. Without that direct evidence, it is usually impossible to know for certain if an individual carries a recessive trait. Only looking at their immediate parents or their offspring can give you a clue.

For example, knowing that a plant several generations back had pink flowers tells you nothing about whether a plant still carries the trait for pink flowers. The pedigree suggests that pink flowers might be possible, but recessives can be hidden for many generations without being expressed. When you are short on space and a generation takes about a year in African violets, there are better ways to plan your crosses.

For these reasons, I like to suggest hybridizers work with plants that already show the traits they wish to combine. If the traits have been identified on the list of dominant/recessive traits, you have much better chances of predicting what the offspring will look like. Crossing a plant with blue flowers with another plant with blue flowers and hoping to get pink-flowered offspring is not a good use of your time and resources. Crossing a plant with pink flowers with a blue-flowered plant that had a pink-flowered parent is a much better cross if your goal is to get pink flowers. At least in this case, you have a good chance to get pink-flowered offspring.

Q: Any suggestions on breeding for micro-minis?

A: I would suggest following the same plan used for breeding any African violet with a goal of small size. Cross the smallest with the smallest and keep the smallest offspring for the next round of breeding. This will reduce the size of the individuals after a

couple of generations. Just be sure that the “small size” is due to genetics, not to something like lack of fertilizer or other poor growing conditions. Genetics for small size can be inherited, but response to a poor growing environment will result in large plants once the stress is removed.

Double-petaled flowers often are sterile.

Q: I have a plant with double-petaled flowers that lack anthers, but have a pistil. I have another plant with double-petaled flowers that lack pistils but produce a few stamens. The first plant is male sterile; the second plant is female sterile. Can I cross the two together and have a chance at a fertile seed pod?

A: Double-petaled flowers often are sterile due to converting the sexual parts into extra petals. Having two plants that seem to be reciprocal in their sterility is not unknown, but it takes a good eye to notice the difference. I would suggest making several crossing attempts to see what happens. Your pollen viability might be low and the pistils may appear normal but be nonfunctional. However, perhaps there is enough normalcy left in the flowers to be successful with some crossing attempts. If you do get a seedpod with viable seeds, I would predict that the offspring will have double-to-triple petals and be sexually sterile. This might be a cross to get a high petal count, but it will likely be a dead end as a breeding program.

Q: All of the genetic trait lists I've seen list “fantasy” as a dominant trait. I've made crosses using a fantasy parent, but none of the offspring are showing any suggestion of fantasy markings in the flowers. What has gone wrong?

A: This has been a most interesting case and I thank the writer for sharing the details of the cross. The hybridizer has grown out nearly 100 offspring and not one has shown the fantasy markings found in the flowers of the parent. There have been some plants with bicolor flowers and some with white edging, but no offspring with the fantasy marks of the parent.

This is a case where I cannot explain the results of this cross. In all other cases of which I am aware, fantasy is a dominant trait that usually penetrates to approximately half of the offspring. In this cross, about 50 of the offspring should have shown fantasy markings, yet none have appeared. The problem is not the sample size, but something working differently than expected in the cross.

I do not know why there have been no fantasy-marked offspring from this cross. However, fantasy is a weird trait and has shown many inconsistencies. One, for example, is failing to come true to type by leaf cuttings. Something unusual has occurred in this cross and perhaps time will eventually show an explanation to these very atypical results.

The Seeds Keep a Long Time ... a Very Long Time

By Robert Ferland Lévis, Quebec, Canada

Like many of you, it all started with a gift of an African violet. I found this a wonderful plant. Gradually, with the help of information and advice from *African Violet Magazine*, I set up a growing space in the basement: shelves, fluorescent lights, etc. I started reproducing plants by taking leaf cuttings and removing suckers.

Hybridizing and Recordkeeping

Each new violet had its own characteristics and I thought it would be interesting to get an African violet that would combine some characteristics of one with those of another. So, in 2006, I started to hybridize my plants. I did this exercise as rigorously as possible: recording for each hybridization attempt the name of

the pollen parent, the name of the pod or seed parent, and the date of harvesting the seeds.

I then stored these envelopes in an airtight jar ... in the refrigerator.

I had read in gardening articles that seeds that had been stored well in a dry and cool place could last a few years. I made small paper envelopes (see Photo 1) identifying the information about the hybridization. I then stored these envelopes in an airtight jar with a layer of dry beans in the bottom to absorb moisture (see Photo 2) and put this jar in the refrigerator. During the first few years, I would take an envelope from this pot and sow the seeds. I did not achieve great miracles but I had some beautiful surprises in the seedlings.



Photo 1. Envelope with seed ID info. Photo 2. Jar of seedlings for refrigeration.

A Pause in Growing

First, there was a house move. The optimal light conditions changed greatly and reduced my activities cultivating African violets.



Photo 3. Hundreds of seedlings from seeds stored for 14-plus years on March 23, 2021. Photo 4. Thinned seedlings on April 17.



A second house move gave me back a cultivation space that allowed me to resume my hybridizing. I still had a dozen of the 2006 seedpod envelopes left. Before I threw everything away, I did a test, a

last-ditch attempt to check the viability of the seeds. I germinated the contents of two large seed pods from the following parents: Optimara Ontario (parent pollen) x Lyons's Spectacular (parent pod).

Viable Seeds Years Later

Surprise! After 14 1/2 years of dormancy, you can see the result ... hundreds of small plants (see Photo 3). Having limited space, I kept the strongest seedlings at each stage. I now have 13 growing violets (see Photo 4).

It is my intention to test the other hybridizations that I have left. The results I've obtained make me hopeful for nice surprises again. And I wanted to share with readers

that if stored properly, African violet seeds can last a very long time!

I thank Dr. Jeffrey Smith for reviewing this article.

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My First Violets: Choosing Your First Violets

By Sandra Skalski Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Email: sskalski@comcast.net

I hope you are enjoying learning about the basics of African violet care. This month, let's spend some time getting to know the plants themselves. Did you know there are more than 20,000 named varieties of African violets? There are thousands of unnamed varieties as well. Sadly, you can't grow all of them, although some growers give it a good try. So, which varieties should you choose?

African Violet Types

African violets are divided into four main types. The first most people encounter are standard plants. They have a single crown, which means they have one main growing point in the center of the plant, and they grow as a flat rosette. Standard plants might grow to 12 or 15 inches in diameter. Large varieties are a subcategory of standard plant. The leaves on large-growing cultivars might become as big as your hand, and the plants can reach 18 to 24 inches in diameter.

Semiminiature and miniature plants also grow as single-crowned plants. However, semiminiature plants typically measure 8 inches or less, and miniatures grow to 6 inches or less. Mature microminiature varieties can be about 2 inches or less in diameter.

Trailing African violets have multiple crowns, meaning they grow new leaves and blossoms from more than one position on the plant. Some trailers become very thick and bushy, while others grow long trails and might even be grown cascading around the pot. Most are good bloomers. Trailers are further classified as standard, miniature and semiminiature. In the case of trailers, the classification refers to the leaf size, not the plant size. Miniature trailers can grow quite large, and some have been grown in 12-inch pots or larger.

The final type of plant is the African violet species. These are not cultivars, but the natural species as found in the wild. They grow as single-crown plants or trailers, and in a variety of leaf sizes and shapes. Some are shy bloomers, but others are floriferous and make lovely specimen plants, especially in natural light.

Your personal taste
will help you decide
which plants you want
to grow.

Where to Start

Your personal taste will help you decide which plants you want to grow. Do you like blues and purples, or pinks and red? Do you like blossoms with fantasy spots, or a white or purple edge? Do you prefer full, double blossoms or simpler single ones? Do you like wavy foliage or leaves that lay flat? How about light green leaves, or dark green and variegated? Is there a narrow windowsill perfect for miniature African violets in your kitchen, or do you have room for some large plants? The selection can be overwhelming, so where do you start?

First, you will need a place to buy some plants. AVSA Commercial Members are excellent sources of beautiful varieties. Find some of their ads in this magazine, and links on the AVSA website (www.africanvioletsofamerica.org/shop/commercial-vendors/). Some of our AVSA members hybridize and sell their plants on social media. Many grocery chains and big-box stores also sell violets.

If you buy your plants there, try to avoid those that are exposed to outdoor plants, since pests such as thrips are happy to hitch a ride on a breeze or someone's clothes and land right on the violet section.

Always buy healthy plants. If you see a plant that looks stressed or unhealthy in any way, pass it by. Perhaps you can help it recover, but it might bring a pest or disease into your growing environment. Don't take a chance. Wherever you buy your plants, it's important to isolate them from the rest of your collection until you are sure they are free from pests and diseases.

Start Small and Smart

Acquiring new plants is exciting and fun. Enjoy your new additions, but know when to say when, both in the number of plants you collect and the price you are willing to pay for them. Be sure you have the time to dedicate to the regular care of your plants. And before you set your sights on the latest, the rarest and the hardest-to-find African violets, be sure you have the skills to care for them. Practice on common varieties. If there's anything worse than losing a plant, it's losing a plant you paid dearly for.

AVSA has some terrific resources to help you choose plants that are reliable growers and bloomers. Each year, members vote on their favorite plants. The results are tabulated and published as the Best Varieties list (see *AVM*, November/December 2020, page 26). The list includes plants that do well for many people, so it's a good place to look for new cultivars to try. Plants that make the Best Varieties list for 3 consecutive years are placed on the Honor Roll of African Violets. A few of these exceptional varieties belong in your collection.

Plant Identification

Many beautiful African violets have no name. We refer to these plants as NOIDS, which stands for No ID. Perhaps the name was lost or maybe the plant was propagated and produced a sport. A sport is a plant produced from vegetative propagation that is not identical to the parent plant. Sometimes a sport is an improvement on the original plant, such as a chimera. Chimeras typically have striped blossoms and require propagation from a sucker or a bloom stem in order to bloom true to the variety.

Sometimes, people will try to identify a NOID. Since there are many thousands of cultivars, many of which look similar, it is virtually impossible to do so accurately. Don't be upset if you request help identifying a plant and are told that you have a NOID. Misidentified plants can create confusion down the line, especially if the plant was propagated under the wrong name and somehow entered into a show. There is nothing wrong with growing a NOID. Enjoy your beautiful plant. It doesn't need a name to bloom and grow for you.

AVSA also provides a program called First Class, which is a database of cultivars, including a description, the hybridizer and the year the plant was introduced. Using the program, you can make lists of your plants and even print full-color labels. Many of the cultivars in the database have a registration number. AVSA is the authorized International Cultivar Registration Authority for the African violet. If you are the hybridizer or identify a sport, you can register the cultivar, provided you have shown that you have reproduced the plant asexually through three successive generations.

Caring for New Plants

What if a couple of varieties are not doing well for you? First, be sure that you are following the 10 Propers for good growing. (See *AVM*, May/June 2019, page 42). Check for signs of pests or diseases. If you find nothing wrong, consider that this particular variety might not like your conditions. I have tried many times to grow Pride of Columbus, a popular semiminiature variety. It doesn't like my cooler growing conditions, so I will leave that one to other growers. Pass on the plants that do not like your conditions and make some room for your next favorites.

I hope you are excited to try some new varieties of African violets. Try something different once you feel comfortable. If you grow standard plants, try a trailer, a miniature, or even a species. Early fall is a great time to order plants from your favorite source, as the weather is cooler during the day, but not too cold at night. Make a list of plants you want to try. Your new favorite plant is out there. Happy hunting and happy growing!



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Lunar Lily White

Exhibited by: Diane Miller
Hybridized by: J. Dates
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Jolly Eyes

Exhibited by: Debbie McInnis
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Imp's Blue Arsenic

Exhibited by: Peggy Mooney
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Miniature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Imp's Lil' Deathcap

Exhibited by: Lucera DeWilde
Hybridized by: J. Jackson
Miniature

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$9,244

Booster Donations support AVSA ongoing general expenses.

■ \$1,000 to \$1,099

Lone Star AV Council, TX

■ \$500 to \$599

Randy G. Deutsch, Sioux Falls, SD

Marge Farrand, Ann Arbor, MI

In honor of Pat Hancock

Vladimir Kalgin, Moscow, Russia

Missouri Valley AV Council, Missouri

April Ness, Trenton, NJ

■ \$400 to \$499

Joyce Stork, Henderson, NV

In honor of Birthday Facebook Fundraiser

■ \$200 to \$299

Susan Anderson, Phoenix, AZ

AVS of Minnesota, MN

Cathleen Graves, Tacoma, WA

Sue Ramser, Wichita Falls, TX

In honor of the Executive Committee 2019-2021

Glenda Williams, Mc Dade, TX

Barbara Werness, Minneapolis, MN

Wisconsin AV Council, WS

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In memory of Mary McFarland

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In memory of Sharon Gartner

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Nancy Moerer, Tulsa, OK

North Star AV Council, MN

North Texas AV Judges Council, TX

Gail Podany, Minnetonka, MN

Sue Ramser, Wichita Falls, TX

In honor of Amy Carruth and Teresa Odle

Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN

Joyce Stork, Henderson, NV

■ \$50 to \$99

Bay State AVS, MA

Dreama Bigio, Norfolk, VA

In honor of Nancy Brooks, a loving mother

Leslie Breen, Houston, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland,

Johnny Williams, and Gary Thurman

Vickie Crider, Humble, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland

Vickie Crider, Humble, TX

In memory of Gary and Rhona Thurman

First AVS of Denton, TX

First AVS of Wichita Falls, TX

Norma Flynn, Montgomery, TX

Susan Gimblet, Fall River, MA

Joyce Groh, Lebanon, PA

Patricia Huffman, Carmichaels, PA

Janet Newburgh, Woodville, FL

James Spittel, Aurora, Ontario

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Mary McFarland

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Gary Thurman

Spring Branch AVC, TX

In memory of Johnny Williams

■ \$25 to \$49

Rosalyn Barclay, Ann Arbor, MI

In honor of Alice Phelps

Erin Charles, Flower Mound, TX

In memory of Emma Lee Chapman

Donna Christianson, Fargo, ND

Patricia De La Torre, Spring, TX
In memory of Mary McFarland
Shawn Edwards, Las Vegas, NV
First Austin AV Society, TX
In memory of Lynn Sissney
Marian McGath, Omaha, NE
Suzanne Myers, Clarkesville, GA
Omaha AV and Gesneriad Society, NE
In memory of the deceased
members of the Omaha Society
Diane Reinke, Silver Spring, MD
Emilia Rykowski, Pompton Plains, NJ

■ **Under \$25**

Penny Allen, Port Orchard, WA
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Marion Martin, Columbia, SC
Rosemary Nestra, Broomfield, CO
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Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN
Kathleen Spracklen, Eugene, OR
Geneva Stagg, Germantown, TN
Mary Vasconcelles, Springfield, IL
Martin Wright, Williamsville, NY

“Perfectly Pittman” Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids,
growing techniques, growing spaces and
AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

**Available in the
AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20**



Family Portrait: *×Achimenantha* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’

By Mel Grice

2019 Crosswind Ct. • Englewood, Ohio
Email: melsgrice@gmail.com

×Achimenantha ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ is an example of one of my favorite gesneriads. The plant makes a strong statement with attractive, dark green, serrated foliage. The bold, bright red corolla and broad, yellow face spotted with red demand your attention. Jeanne Krieger hybridized this intergeneric gesneriad. She crossed an *achimenes* plant with a *smithiantha* plant, both rhizomatous gesneriads.

About *×Achimenantha*

The “x” in *×Achimenantha* indicates it is a cross between two genera — *Achimenes* and *Smithiantha*. The resulting name is a combination of the two genus names. Some growers incorrectly add an apostrophe to Northwoods in this plant’s name. It should read just Northwoods because Jeanne Krieger is from the Great Northwoods forest area of the Great Lakes region. She used the alpha name “Northwoods” for her *streptocarpus* hybrids as well.

×Achimenanthas have rhizomatous root structures. Rhizomes are one of the three root structures found in gesneriads, the other two being fibrous-only and tuberous structures. Rhizomes actually are modified stems and they grow perpendicular to the force of gravity.

Scaly rhizomes are produced under the soil when conditions are favorable. Scaly rhizomes often resemble pine cones and help the plants remain alive during the dry season in the wild. They perform the same function as a tuber or bulb so **do not** discard the pot if the plant looks dead — it is only resting or dormant.

Propagation

×Achimenantha propagation is by stem cuttings in water or soilless mix. Stem cuttings root very quickly, sometimes within days. Rhizomes can be planted whole, in pieces, or by removing individual scales and planting them. Bear in mind that some rhizomatous plants are shy rhizome producers, so don’t assume that a pot will be full of rhizomes for the future. Always take some stem cuttings to be sure to keep the variety.



×Achimenantha ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ grown and photographed by Terri Vicenzi.

A crucial factor in rhizome production is keeping the plants consistently well fed and watered. If excess drying occurs too early in the growth cycle, the plants might go dormant prematurely without producing any rhizomes for next year. I try to have two or more pots of a variety growing so that I won’t lose the variety if I occasionally forget to water a tray of plants. I try to place each pot in a different part of my plant room so that they receive water on different days.

Most rhizomatous plants do not have a required dormancy period like some gesneriads do. If pruned back to the soil level after flowering, they usually will sprout again immediately if they have made new scaly rhizomes. Thus, they can be kept going throughout the year with the proper light and warmth levels.

Growing ×*Achimenant*

Terri Vicenzi, from Indiana, grew the plant in the photo. She says, “I’ve attempted growing ×*Achimenant* ‘Northwoods Sunburst’ a few times. Initially, the rhizomes were stubborn to root, and I was only able to coax it out of dormancy by separating and planting the individual rhizome scales.

“I had a young, blooming plant within a few months, but it failed to produce any additional foliage and promptly died. I was not wick watering at that time,

and I believe a period of dryness may have been the issue. Luckily, I had saved a few tip cuttings and started over once again.

**Do not discard the pot
if the plant looks dead.**

“This time, I wick watered from the very beginning, and grew it relatively pot bound (3-inch pot) and very close to three T8 fluorescent bulbs. It bloomed for many weeks in the fall.”

Congratulations to Article Contest Winners

By Teresa Odle

The 2020-2021 AVM article contest has ended and the winners were announced during the Cyber Diamond Celebration. Congratulations to:

Terri Vicenzi: 1st Place

Growing Healthy African Violets — The Root of the Issue, March/April 2021

Karyn Cichocki: 2nd Place

Getting the Most Out of Leaves, September/October 2020

Scott Evans: 3rd Place

Up. Down. All Around: The Three Basic Plant Nutrients, January/February 2021

Thank you again to all entrants; we had some great articles this past year. And special thanks to Pat Hancock, Sue Hoffmann, the contest judges, and the generous hybridizers and exhibitors who donated the prizes.

Honoring Our 2021 Outstanding AVSA Members

By Linda Hall Email: linda.hall6641@hotmail.com

Thank you to all members who submitted nominees for the 2020 AVSA Society Awards. This year, we announced our winners at the AVSA Cyber Convention and here in *AVM*. Congratulations to our worthy recipients!

■ Distinguished Service Award



Recipient:

Winston J. Goretsky

AVSA would like to honor Winston Goretsky with a Distinguished Service Award for his dedication to AVSA for more than 40 years. Winston was a teenager when he joined AVSA in 1979 and he has

served AVSA in multiple capacities as an International Director, 3rd Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, 1st Vice-President and President. He has chaired numerous committees, is a Life Member, an Honorary Life Member, a Master Judge and a Teacher.

Winston is currently serving as an International Director and as Past President.

He is the only individual who has been both the president of AVSA and African Violet Society of Canada (AVSC) and he will soon be the president of the Gesneriad Society.

Winston has been the official *AVM* photographer since 1997 and has been photographing conventions since 1995. Winston also has produced the AVSA calendar since 2005.

He has been the recipient of an Honorary One-Year Membership (2005), Continuing Service Award (2008), Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership (2011) and an Honorary Life Membership (2017).

Winston's enthusiasm for African violets is contagious. He has traveled to China on several occasions to promote our beloved Society. He has sacrificed precious graduations and family functions to be present for AVSA. He works behind the scenes in many capacities, getting projects completed. Recently, he has taken on a project management role to implement the iMIS solution at the AVSA office. He has worked to integrate this solution with the Website Committee to launch a newly redesigned website for members and the interested public.

AVSA is pleased to honor Winston Goretsky with a Distinguished Service Award.

■ Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership



Recipient: Joan Santino

This year, the Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership is presented to a woman who has served her affiliate for more than 35 years. As president, vice-president and recording secretary, Joan Santino has led her club to

great heights. She is always there to lend a helping hand and knows how to get the job done. She is instrumental in creating show themes. Every year she serves on one or two committees and is a senior judge. Joan puts that skill to work by always being there — sitting at the classification table doing her job identifying plants and helping with last-minute grooming before a plant enters the showroom.

Joan loves to mentor new members in growing African violets and gesneriads. She has presented many programs on designs, dish gardens, terrariums and how to grow "quality" show plants. She is the club's "go-to woman" and always promotes AVSA.

Joan is a member of the African Violet Society of Springfield, the Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society, and in 2012 she received an Honorary One-Year Membership from AVSA for serving as Show Chair for the 2011 AVSA Convention in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

AVSA is pleased to present Joan Santino with the Hudson Memorial Award for Affiliate Leadership.

■ Continuing Service Award

Recipient: Joyce Stork

AVSA is pleased to present a Continuing Service Award to Joyce Stork for her contributions in launching AVSA's WordPress website. She has been self-taught by studying YouTube videos and has become very



knowledgeable in WordPress.

Joyce has been a driving force in marketing AVSA and plans to launch a nationwide membership campaign in the near future.

She has been dedicated to both the 2020 Virtual Violets Convention and the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021, constantly recruiting members to serve in various capacities and providing innovative ideas. The Cyber Convention website was largely Joyce's idea.

Joyce continues to provide up-to-date information to both members and hobbyists on a weekly and monthly basis with *AVSA Growing Tips* and *AVSA News*.

She has served AVSA as a Director, 3rd Vice-President, 2nd Vice President, 1st Vice President, and President, and has chaired numerous committees. She currently chairs the Marketing Committee.

Joyce has also been the recipient of two Honorary One-Year Memberships (1989, 2001), an Honorary Life Membership (2009) and the Bronze Medal Award (1989). She is a Master Judge, Teacher, Life Member, Honorary Life Member and a member of the Legacy Society.

Joyce has donated countless hours of her time, making her Continuing Service Award a tribute to her dedication to AVSA.

Thank you to all
members who
submitted nominees
for the 2020 AVSA
Society Awards.

■ Honorary Life Membership

Recipient: Sue Ramser

This year AVSA is honored to present Sue Ramser with an Honorary Life Membership. Sue has served this society over the past two years with one of the most difficult presidencies there has ever been. AVSA has had no



in-person conventions or meetings. She conducted meetings via Zoom to move AVSA in a positive direction in this trying time of the pandemic.

It was with a heavy heart that she had to deliver the news that not one, but two conventions were canceled. But Sue smiled and pushed AVSA forward with two virtual conventions and a new website, and kept a tight rein on our budget with help from the Executive Committee.

Sue has been a member of AVSA for 49 years. She has served and chaired the Society on many committees, as a Director, Secretary, Treasurer, 3rd Vice President, 2nd Vice President, 1st Vice President and its President. She is an Honorary Life Member, Life Member, Master Judge, Teacher, and a member of the Legacy Society. In 1993 Sue compiled "Teaching Tools" for judges, which she and Dr. Barbara Pershing updated in 2013.

Locally, Sue is a member of the First African Violet Society of Wichita Falls, having served in all the club's offices. She is also a member of Lone Star African Violet Council and North Texas African Violet Judges Council, serving both councils in many capacities.

Sue is a graduate of the University of North Texas, Denton with a Bachelor of Business Administration. One of her other interests is genealogy, which led her to qualify for membership in The Daughters of the Republic of Texas and National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. And of course, her number-one other interest is her grandchildren. Just ask her!

AVSA honors Sue Ramser with an Honorary Life Membership for her dedication and tenacity in leading AVSA as its President.

■ Honorary One-Year Memberships



Recipient: Susan Anderson

AVSA would like to present Susan Anderson an Honorary One-Year Membership for her service as Convention/Show Co-Chair for the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention. Susan and her co-chair worked countless hours to

make this convention a reality in the wake of the pandemic and our canceled in-person convention. Without her vision, the year 2020 would have passed by without a convention.

Susan has been a member of AVSA since 1997. In 2016, she co-founded Copper State African Violet Club. She has been a Director and served on several committees. Susan currently chairs Tally Time and the Salary Committee. She has been AVSA's 3rd Vice-President, 2nd Vice President and is currently the 1st Vice President.

AVSA thanks Susan Anderson for her dedication to AVSA and its future by awarding her an Honorary One-Year Membership.



Recipient: Roxanne Clapp

AVSA is pleased to present Roxanne Clapp an Honorary One-Year Membership. She has graciously donated her time and skills as a professional graphic designer to create the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Con-

vention logos. Roxanne has helped with the Booster Fund, the new website, and marketing Bloomlala

and the drinkware. She was also instrumental in creating the Advertising Media Kit, which helped vendors with logos and ad copy. The 1950 logo project took her weeks to clean up and now has a new life.

Roxanne maintains all the AVSA brand mark files so we can customize images for specific applications. Not only has she accomplished all these tasks, but she has done them in a timely manner.

AVSA is thankful for Roxanne's skills and enthusiasm to move the society into the future.



Recipient: Mary Corondan

AVSA is pleased to award an Honorary One-Year Membership to Mary Corondan for being the Convention/Show Co-Chair of the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention. The virtual convention was precipitated by the pandemic,

which canceled our in-person convention, but the show must go on. Mary worked tirelessly to persuade AVSA members to contribute to this effort. She always goes above and beyond any task she undertakes and does it with grace.

Mary is AVSA's 2nd Vice President, acting Secretary, chairs the Shows and Judges Committee, chairs the Policies and Procedures Committee and is currently the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Convention Show Chair.

Locally, Mary is a member of the Lone Star African Violet Council, First Nighter African Violet Society of Dallas and North Texas African Violet Judges Council. She is also an AVSA Master Judge.

AVSA honors Mary Corondan with an Honorary One-Year Membership for her dedication to making the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention a reality.



Recipient: Richard Craft

AVSA would like to thank Richard Craft with an Honorary One-Year Membership for his many contributions to the society. He was instrumental in making the 2020 Virtual Violet Convention a reality by orchestrating the commercial salesroom, arranging five educational presentations and providing technical assistance for web development.

Richard has been very active in the Cyber Diamond Celebration 2021 Convention. He organized the commercial salesroom, video tours of commercial facilities, commercials appearing in Zoom social activities, educational presentations and prerecorded Zoom meetings. He has also increased his technical support for the entire website.

Richard has been a Director since 2019 and is the Advertising Committee Chair, Marketing Committee Co-Chair, YouTube Channel Head and Library Committee Vice Chair.

Locally, Richard is a member of Glitter Gulch African Violet Growers.

AVSA is pleased to present an Honorary One-Year Membership to Richard Craft.



Recipient: Teresa Odle

AVSA would like to thank Teresa Odle for her three years of dedication in producing a quality *African Violet Magazine*. She took on this assignment and made it her own. She liked to theme issues with articles on similar

topics but also added many other quality articles to each magazine. Teresa also helped make the digital *AVM* a reality in 2020.

We are excited for Teresa as she leaves for a new position as a grandmother, but we will greatly miss her.

AVSA is grateful for the time Teresa has been part of our society and the excellent *AVM* she produced. For her years of service, AVSA presents to Teresa Odle an Honorary One-Year Membership.

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from March 1 through April 30, 2021 Total: \$190

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

■ **\$100-\$199**

Jan Houston, Champaign, IL

■ **\$25-\$49**

Margaret Nasta, McKeesport, MA

■ **Under \$25**

Delores Baker, Cheyenne, WY

Marilyn Heinrich, Northport, NY

Barbara Kirby, Saint John, IN

Suzanne Myers, Clarkesville, GA

Carol Semrau, Ramsey, MN

Lynne Shandley, Seattle, WA



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Buffalo Hunt

Exhibited by: Ben Haning
Hybridized by: K. Stork
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Rebel's Sugar Pie

Exhibited by: Susan Kautz
Hybridized by: R. Bann
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus
'Dale's Lost in Space'

Exhibited by: Elmer Godeny
Hybridized by: D. Martens



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Streptocarpus
'Texas Hot Chili'

Exhibited by: Marie Burns
Hybridized by: D. Martens

In Memory

Sharon Gartner

Sharon Yvette Gartner passed away on April 22, 2021, surrounded by her loving family.

As a young girl, Sharon's grandfather passed on to her his love of plants, and African violets in particular. Her interest was piqued! She was infatuated to the point that she took some of these violets along to college. But she always wanted to raise them on a grander scale. One day, she discovered an African violet club that was just forming (the Heart of Jacksonville African Violet Society), and she decided to follow her dream.

Sharon quickly became a key member of this club, until she was at its very heart and soul. She became a world-class grower, earning high awards at regional and national shows. She worked hard behind the scenes as well, and was the Treasurer for the African Violet Council of Florida, as well as one of the Directors and the Convention Show Awards Chair for AVSA.

To her African violet family, Sharon was a great leader, supreme organizer, and beloved friend. We are grieving the loss of someone who can never be replaced. Her dynamic presence and unfailing enthusiasm for the violet community will long be remembered and her many contributions will continue. Her legacy is carried on by those who knew and loved her.

In all of our hearts we know that Sharon is not really gone ... she has simply been ... repotted. She will bloom now in God's garden where we are sure she will be considered "Best in Show."

Mary McFarland

The African Violet world has lost a valuable member in Mary McFarland. She was a friend, mentor, master judge, and an inspiration to all.

Mary was co-founder of Sundowners African Violet Club in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. When she retired, she moved to Woodlands, Texas. Here, she joined Spring Branch African Violet Club of Houston and Lone Star African Violet Society. She continued to do workshops and show plants. Health issues began to take a toll on her, but Mary attended the AVSA show held in Houston in 2019. She entered several plants and won awards for each one. This would be Mary's last show.

Mary's knowledge and love for violets and streps will live on through the many friends she made with this hobby.

Gerald "Chad" Tutor

Gerald Chadwick "Chad" Tutor, age 49, of Memphis, Tennessee, passed away March 15, 2021. He was a much-loved member of the Memphis African Violet Society (MAVS), as well as a member of AVSA and the Gesneriad Society. He leaves behind Ruth Tutor, his wife of 21 years, who also is a member of MAVS. Chad was a newer member of our club who was always eager to learn and willing to help. You never saw him without a smile, and he brought much joy to our club.

Chad sang in his church choir and played in his church's orchestra and hand bell choir. He was a graduate of Ole Miss and worked in tax accounting. He was an avid fan of Ole Miss.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Choctaw

Exhibited by: Anne Nicholas
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Optimara Little Opal

Exhibited by: Kathy Lahti
Hybridized by: Holtkamp
Miniature



And the Winners Are ...

By Mary J. Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

Email: winners@avsa.org

■ Albuquerque AVC, NM — Winners:

• Best AVSA Standard Collection: K's Berry Bianco, K's Freedom, K's Sangria Splash; Best in Show/Best Semiminiature: Winnergreen; Best Standard: K's Simply Put; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Kathy Hajner.

• Best Miniature: Windsome; Best Trailer: Lil Runaround; Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpus* 'Gwen',

Renee Bernard.

• Best Design; Design Sweepstakes,
Shirley Tetreault.

■ Copper State AVC, AZ — Winners:

• Best AVSA Standard Collection: Harbor Blue, Granger's Wonderland, Granger Gardens' Ebb Tide; Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5i clone *velutinus*

lite, S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, S. 5f clone *orbicularis*; Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Lilli Pilli; Best Standard: Granger's Wonderland; Best Miniature: Orchard's Bumble Magnet; Best Species: S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert; Horticulture Sweepstakes,

Candace Baldwin.

• Best Semiminiature: Rob's Fuddy Duddy,
Beverly Wombold.

• Best Gesneriad: *Streptocarpella* 'Sparkle',
Denise Lee.

• Best Design, **Susan Anderson.**

• Design Sweepstakes, **Bill Patterson.**

Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Club Starving for Activities? A Possible Cure

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

I belong to several clubs in the East and two in the province of Ontario, Canada. Several of these clubs have had Zoom meetings throughout the pandemic, but my local club, the African Violet and Gesneriad Society of Western New York, had not met since February 2020. The place we meet was closed down and banned anyone from coming into the building, so we didn't have much choice. We do have a wonderful newsletter from member Holly Pohl, which has kept us in touch over this period of "starvation."

Parking Lot Exchange

Through emails with friends, I learned about their plant exchange meetings outdoors, in a parking lot. This sounded like a possibility for our club. I proposed it to our president, other officers and board of directors. We set a date and another as a possible rain date. We chose Saturday afternoons, since that seemed to be a time when even those who are working might be able to attend.

The day came, and it was beautiful! Not a cloud in the sky and temperatures in the mid to high 60s. One by one, members' cars pulled in. Those of us who are fully vaccinated went without masks, since we were outdoors, and the CDC allowed that. Some members kept their masks on, which was fine.

A total of seven members attended. One lady took plants for two other members who were out of town that day. We all were so happy to see each other. Almost all attendees brought plants to exchange, and we had a good time doing so.

Project Plants

I had torn apart several large plants; I gave out the cuttings and starter plants as project plants for 2022, hoping that we can have our regularly scheduled show by that time. As an aside, I must tell you that

we decided years ago to ask members to bring their project plants to enter in the club project class(es).

My local club ... had
not met since
February 2020.

We ask our judges to choose the best one in each class, but not actually judge every plant. It works! We get many more plants entered in these classes this way. It shows the way the same plant grows for different people in their conditions and creates a lot of interest. Your club might wish to try this approach.

Successful Exchange

Everyone went home from our plant exchange with some new starters, crowns or leaf cuttings to be put down and grown on. What a boost to our starving morale and an inspiration for each of us to grow something new or different. It also helped each member to make some much-needed room on their plant shelves and windowsills.

My only regret is that I got so involved with visiting and looking over plants that I completely forgot to take pictures to accompany this article! My bad. You can easily imagine the vehicles parked in a row, all well spaced, and members mingling around the trunks or tables some folks brought. It was such fun and a greatly needed activity.

If it Ain't Broke — Don't Fix it!

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

Email: kdc05@ptd.net

Whenever I give a program on growing plants, I always mention that if you are going to try something new, you should do so only on a couple of plants and wait about two to three months to see how it works in your conditions. Well, sometimes I don't listen to my own suggestions.

I wick all my violets using a plastic grid that sits on pieces of PVC pipe in a tray; a mat sits on the grid with ends hanging down into the tray, which is filled with water, as shown in photo 1. I've been using this method for several years and it works quite well. However, there are a few drawbacks:

- If the acrylic felt mat dries out because I fail to fill the tray with water in time, it is a pain to rewet.
- I really need to repot the plants about every 4 to 5 months; otherwise the roots will grow down the wick and into the mat and even down into the water in the tray. The roots are not easy to remove from the mat.



Photo 1. Tray with mat for capillary watering.

A Change to Watering

When I repotted all my violets in January, I had waited a bit too long. Many of the pots had roots that had grown into the mat, and in several cases through the mat, and there was a mass of roots in the water. So, I decided to do away with the mat and just put long wicks in all the pots, hanging the

wicks down through the grid into the tray filled with water.

I knew that my plants were all free of soil mealybugs so I did not worry about them getting spread around from one pot to another via the wicks. The second photo shows the tray and grid without the mat.

There was a mass of roots in the water.

Problems with the New Method

Well, since then, I've had a devil of a time with the wicks not working and pots drying out, which I don't understand, since I started the wicking action as I usually do. Also, without the mat, the water was evaporating more quickly and algae were growing in the trays. This doesn't happen with the mats because the dark material blocks light to the water.



Photo 2. Tray setup without the mat.

I also noticed some nasty looking gooey stuff growing on the wicks. So, 2 months later, I've put the mats back on all the trays, which involved removing the trays from the stand, all the plants

off the trays, putting the moistened mats on the trays, replacing the plants, and then putting the trays back.

Back to Fixed

I purchased some of the VT Vattex capillary matting mentioned by Mel Grice during a January program. Hydroponic growers use this matting. It is thinner, wets quite easily, but it is light gray so I don't know whether it will hinder the algae growth as the black mat does.

I'll just have to
remember to repot
more often.

Time will tell, and I'll just have to remember to repot more often to prevent a repeat of the roots growing into the new mats.

Coming Events

Summer African violet shows and sales still might be cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This list represents those shows scheduled on our website as of May 26, 2021. Be sure to check the AVSA website Events page (www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook, or contact the organizers below for the latest information.

■ September 10-12 — Maryland

National Capital Area Chapter of the
Gesneriad Society

Show and sale

Homestead Gardens

743 W. Central Avenue

Davidsonville, MD

Friday: Sale, 1-6 p.m.

Saturday: Show, 1-6 p.m.; sale, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday: Show, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; sale, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bill Schmidt: 804-266-6157

Danraybill@gmail.com

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

■ September 18 — Texas

NASA Area African Violet Society

Fall Plant Show and Display

Bay Harbour United Methodist Church

3459 FM Rd. 518 East, League City, TX

10 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Dianne Duggan 239-247-3817

ddgcampbell@earthlink.net

■ October 22-23 — Arkansas

Central Arkansas African Violet Society

Show and sale

North Little Rock Community Center

2700 Willow St

North Little Rock, AR

Friday: noon- 5 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Alice Brown jerryalice@att.net

Missing Millennial

By Dr. Minh Bui Rockville, Maryland

In the past decade, plant societies across the country have seen local clubs shutting their doors, membership dwindling, and lack of participation from two key demographics: those of the millennial generation (born between 1981 and 1996) and persons of color. To address this growing concern that is affecting plant organizations across the country, I sought input from millennial peers and people of color to see what concerns they have and reasons why they have not joined a plant society.

Surveying Millennials

In an online plant group with 3,000-plus plant enthusiasts, most identifying as both millennial and a person of color, only 12 passionate respondents replied to my request with reasons why they have not joined an official plant club/society. The following are listed in order of most frequent responses:

- Lack of racial/ethnic diversity.** Three-quarters of respondents reported that lack of racial diversity was a reason why they chose not to participate in formal plant clubs. Several stated they felt out of place or awkward when they first sat in on a meeting, and never went back.

- Age disparity.** Two-thirds stated that the age difference between current members and prospective members is too wide, creating a false impression that the organization is not welcoming, or that it is exclusive to a more mature membership.

- Lack of advertising.** Half of respondents were surprised that formal plant clubs/societies existed, claiming lack of advertising in age-relevant media sources.

- Lack of local presence.** A third of repliers pointed out that there is a lack of local plant clubs in their hometown.

- Presence of online plant communities.** One quarter of respondents replied that online plant com-

munities (such as Facebook plant groups) were sufficient for their plant needs, from purchasing plants, to getting help, education, and forming online communities/friendships.

- Inconvenient timing of local meetings.** A few individuals pointed out that the local club's meeting times were inconvenient for their work schedule, favoring those who are underemployed or retired.

Several stated they
felt out of place or
awkward ...

Attracting New Members

Some reasons respondents stated for not joining plant clubs/societies are a challenge to address, while some can be easily ameliorated with limited resources and costs. The most easily addressable point for local clubs is the inconvenient times that some plant clubs meet.

If the club wants to attract a younger generation of members, having meetings on a weekday cannot be an option. I recently was asked to give a seminar on African violets to a garden club that meets on Thursdays at 10 a.m., which meant I had to take half a day off work.

Several respondents stated they were not aware that plant clubs or societies existed, and several who knew of them were unaware of the benefits that come with being a member. After visiting plant societies' websites, respondents found them a challenge to navigate, riddled with outdated information and resources, and aesthetically uninviting. A web

engineer respondent referred to these as “Legacy” websites, formed approximately two decades ago, and having undergone no significant updates or improvements to effectively attract, advertise, and communicate to a generation with information at their fingertips. (AVSA had a “Legacy” website, but it was updated and revamped this past year).

The Internet has changed how quickly information is disseminated to an entire organization and the processing of electronic payments to cover membership dues and purchases. As we have seen in the past several months, it also has affected how members can remain in touch and still learn and interact through virtual meetings.

Role of Online Participation

Specialized groups (such as Facebook plant groups) have formed online to give plant enthusiasts a group in which to “talk” about their interests and even get help with plants. A few national plant societies have created Facebook groups that establish the organization’s expertise and encourage information exchange among their participants. At times, organizations’ groups have fewer participants than do informal groups.

Some might argue the Internet is the downfall of organized societies. The responses of the 0.4 percent of an online plant group with 3,000-plus members suggest that many might not feel the need to join an organized plant club. Further, for many, an online plant group they can log into whenever they have questions — even though the answers might not be correct — will suffice.

Still, we should target even that small percentage who are passionate and curious about plant societies. They might translate to 0.4 percent of the population of a thriving city or town filled with citizens of all ages who grow plants by their windowsill.

Creating Diverse and Thriving Plant Societies

The prevailing concern remains, which is getting Millennials (and those younger) and persons of color into the organizations. I had a discussion with a participant who identifies as a person of color and as generation X (born between 1965 and 1980) age.

This person currently serves as president of a local plant organization and stated that a recent rise in membership representing people who are younger and of color in her club could be attributed to her presence and leadership.

You are indispensable
in the next crucial
phase of recruiting
members.

Is it possible that when others see those who look like them in positions of authority and expertise, it motivates participation from those of a similar demographic? For organizations that currently have members who are millennials or persons of color, it is advised that the groups’ leaders mentor, encourage, and groom these members for leadership or support roles that might attract future members similar to their demographic.

To the valuable and experienced mentors who continue to encourage and teach, and who will leave a lasting impact for years to come upon AVSA members like me, I encourage you to continue these efforts. You are indispensable in the next crucial phase of recruiting members who are just as passionate about the hobby as you are, and who can carry on your knowledge and legacy.

The bridge between the generations must be built, but for it to be successful and sustainable, the effort will likely require the Internet and social media in some context. I suggest a visual campaign, particularly at the national level, that depicts the diversity in age, gender, race and ethnicity, and sexual orientation to drive the message that plant societies are inclusive and fun.

Let this be our priority to reestablish not only membership, but also comradery, friendship, and education, all benefits of being a part of something great.



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Jolly Butterfly

Exhibited by: Mary Corondan
Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Donna's Twilight Snowfall

Exhibited by: Donna Brining
Hybridized by: D. Brining
Standard



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Sinningia
'Venetian Moon'

Exhibited by: Susan Arnao
Hybridized by: Al Wojcik



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Episcia
'My Precious'

Exhibited by: Jane Rexilius
Hybridized by: G. Barnes

Impact of Spectrally Balanced with Far-Red LEDs on African Violets

By Tim Pinkelman, Jennifer Vincent,
Sam Cunningham, and Dr. Minh Bui

For decades, members of the African violet community have successfully grown their plants with artificial lights, most notably T12 and T8 fluorescent lights. Spectral analyses reveal these fluorescent lights often emit green at nearly 100 percent, but less in the blue and red regions, and these regions are essential for photosynthetic efficiency.

During the past decade, LEDs entered the picture, but their inconsistent quality left many frustrated, and others hesitant to make the switch. Here, four growers from three different parts of the United States experiment with a new generation of LEDs that max out at the blue and red peaks (instead of green) with an added far-red portion of the spectrum — which has not been used on African violets before.

The Full Spectrum Plus 18-watt LED lights were generously donated by orchid expert Jeff Young from The Orchid Hobbyist (theorchidhobbyist.com). In return, we provided our honest evaluation growing different types of violets in various culture conditions. Below are the assessments from the four growers.

■ Tim Pinkelman

I started growing African violets during the wee years of my childhood. I remember starting scads of violets growing up. One of the most enjoyable parts was being able to give one away when company came to visit. During high school and college, violets took the back burner. A few years back, I decided it was time to jump back into the hobby, this time mainly with semiminiature plants. While I love all violets, semis are both easy to grow and to hoard.

Methods

I grow using a large wire rack that accommodates two trays per shelf. Plants sit on eggcrate wicking trays for constant water/fertilizer uptake. Plants were freshly repotted in a wicking-optimized mix of 60

percent perlite and 30 percent peat mix. Since it was winter, I covered the shelf to raise temperatures inside the unit.

Duplicates of plants
grew on both the
control shelf and the
far-red spectrum shelf.

I placed duplicate plants in corresponding locations on each shelf for consistency and ease of reference. The control group in this case was the duplicates placed on the 4000K shelf. Plants are 8 inches below the lights and have a photo period of 8 hours per day.

Constants

- The plants all measured the same distance (8 inches) from the crowns to the fixtures.
- The plants received the same water, with the same fertilizer type and amounts.
- The plants were exposed to the same photo period, until the last two weeks.
- The plants were freshly repotted at the beginning of the experiment and were torn down to make them similar in size.
- Duplicates of plants in similar growth phases at the start of the experiment grew on both the control shelf and the far-red spectrum shelf for comparison.

Variables

- The lights were Full Spectrum Plus LEDs with far-red spectrum vs generic 4000K LEDs (Kihung T5 LED tube light fixture).

• There were potential variances in temperatures, depending on shelf or time of day. Shelves were located one on top of each other to minimize differences.

Question

- Will Full Spectrum Plus LED lights help flatten the plants with an upright growth habit?
- Will the full spectrum lights help plants with tight crowns to loosen?
- Will the new lights cause plants with “wagon wheel” tendencies to have a more desirable growth habit?
- What effect on bloom will the Full Spectrum Plus lights have?

Conjecture

There are many variables in the African violet hybridizing realm. Hybridizers select plants based on what grows the best in their own setups. This is why some growers have little luck with certain African violets, while others have good luck. For instance, hybridizer A might be using LED light, while hybridizer B uses fluorescent light; yet another hybridizer might be growing in greenhouses.

As any good hybridizer should, they select the strongest seedlings that are growing for them, inadvertently selecting the plant that does best under their particular lighting conditions. This can be the cause of incompatibilities with certain plants and growers.

I did not expect the Full Spectrum Plus lights to be a one-size-fits-all approach. I thought they would do well with certain violets that grow poorly under other artificial lighting applications, possibly granting a second chance for the “troubled tenants” on our shelves. That being said, just like some plants ail under certain lights, I expected the same to be true about these lights.

Initial Tests and Observations

Light meter tests showed that the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights were outputting one-third more light at 3300 lux than the control lights at 2040 lux (measured with a Leaton L830 light meter).

Despite this, I kept the photo period the same for a better comparison. The light output on the far-red spectrum bulbs is noticeably cooler in kelvin and

makes the plants and blooms appear much more vivid.

Test Plants

I selected a wide range of plants, some exhibiting troubling growth patterns, and other select African violets and other gesneriads for the Full Spectrum Plus lights. I have listed those of consequence, along with their ailments:

1. Rob’s Cool Fruit – spaced-out growth
2. Scales – upright growth
3. Toy Castle – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
4. Queen Sabrina – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
5. Star Wars – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
6. Rob’s Scrumptious – tight center growth
7. Tipped Honey – upright growth
8. Psychedelic Show – upright growth
9. Sassy Angel – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
10. NK-Dusha Moja – duplicate plant for head-to-head comparison
11. Jolly Fireball – spaced-out growth
12. *Streptocarpus* ‘Dale’s Polar Blizzard’ – extreme upright growth

Not all plants contained on the Full Spectrum Plus LED shelf are listed, as they did not have ailments initially. I wanted to maximize usage of shelf space and see if plants growing well under the control do well under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights.

Note: One primulina plant and two petrocosmeas were grown successfully with no ill effect under the lights.

Findings

While results were clear, they were not always consistent. Some plants exhibited a positive response, while others exhibited neutral or negative response to the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. Commonalities included what I call a “superbloom.” I had not been preparing these plants for show, but many of them under the full-spectrum bulbs put on an extreme show blooming, which led to concern that they might bloom themselves to death.



NK-Dusha Moja grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs (left) and control lights (right). Tipped Honey's upright growth resolved under the test LEDs. Toy Castle grown under control lights (left) and full spectrum (right). Rob's Scrumptious still had tight centers, but lots of blooms after moving to Full Spectrum Plus lights.

While this can be bad, it is easily rectified by selectively plucking bloom stalks. My Jolly Fireball, for instance, exhibited the most intense bloom I have ever witnessed on it to date.

A secondary observation is the leaf coloration. Overall, plants under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights developed darker green pigmentation (unless they were crown variegated. Many plants grew faster under these LED lights). However, a couple of outliers did not. Sassy Angel and Scales grew larger under the control LED lights; Star Wars showed no perceivable difference in plant size. Many plants grew larger and darker green than the control plants. I learned after further research that this is to be expected because far-red spectrum promotes chlorophyll production.

Crown variegation exhibited a possible concern in African violet growth under these full spectrum plus lights. NK-Dusha Moja (pictured) and Scales were the only two plants with crown variegation that were duplicated. NK-Dusha Moja was tastefully variegated under the test lights, while the control plant showed next to no variegation.

Anecdotal evidence might suggest that suckers are more common under the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. I found I had to be extra judicious.

Rob's Scrumptious was getting tight centers on the control shelf, so I moved it to the full-spectrum lights. It showed no improvement but sent out many blooms. Tight centers suggest too long under lights, which led me to reduce the time under the Full Spectrum Plus lights from 8 hours to 7 hours instead later in the experiment.

Upright growth exhibited in Tipped Honey (pictured) and Psychedelic Show resolved under the full-spectrum lights, despite many blooms pushing through the foliage. Spaced-out growth in Rob's Cool Fruit was not resolved, however, it did resolve on Ness' Crinkle Blue. I have incon-

clusive findings on Jolly Fireball, because the titanic flower head is covering most of the foliage. From what I can see, it is looking as good as can be expected. Upright growth on Streptocarpus 'Dale's Polar Blizzard' corrected itself under full spectrum lights as well.

Conclusion

Overall, my initial conjecture was correct in that select plants would do no better or worse under Full Spectrum Plus LED lights. However, problem African violets did do better under the far-red spectrum lights, with a few outliers. I underestimated the effect it would have on bloom production and chlorophyll synthesis. These lights tend to make plants grow and bloom faster overall, with more blooms than from traditional lighting.

In an ideal world, I think a grower could benefit from having half the lights on their shelf be basic LEDs, and the other half be full spectrum plus LED lights. You get the best of both worlds that way. If a certain plant does not respond well under one, put it under the other (with show plants getting priority under full spectrum plus LEDs).

Furthermore, this approach will stretch the grower's dollar because the biggest drawback to the Full Spectrum Plus lights is the price. I outfitted my entire shelf with the control bulbs for the price of a single Full Spectrum Plus bulb. For show growers and serious hobbyists, the expenditure is worth considering, especially if it means prize-winning plants to bring to shows. I plan to use these in my show-growing ventures to come, and continue experimenting with them.

■ **Jennifer Vincent**

When I was a child, my great aunt Arlene introduced me to African violets. She would let me take leaves from her plants, and I planted them in the same pot as a big jade plant at my grandma's house. I enjoy hybridizing and will hopefully someday soon have my own registered hybrids.



Optimara Little Trio on November 2, 2020. Top: control plant; bottom: grown under Full Spectrum Plus lights. On September 17, 2020, I placed two Full Spectrum Plus LED lights on one shelf of my 4-foot wire stand, 8 to 9 inches above the tops of the pots, for eight hours. My control (comparison) shelves are on the same stand, with two Kihung T5 4000K LED 4-foot

tube light fixtures (20W, 2200lm), on for 9 hours. My thermostat is set between 66 and 68 degrees with humidity around 34 percent. All plants in the experiment are wick watered using the same fertilizer.



Plants growing under full-spectrum lights on November 11, 2020. Photo by Jennifer Vincent.



Rivermist Sizzle (top: control; bottom: full spectrum) on January 16, 2021.

On November 11, 2020, I turned the lights down from eight to seven hours. Plants were blooming a lot and some leaves appeared to be burning on the edges.

January 26, 2021: Providing 7 hours of light worked well for most of my test plants. Most of the plants on the shelf with Full Spectrum Plus LED lights have more flowers and more vibrantly colored flowers.

January 28, 2021: Some plants under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs had smaller diameters. Powwow was showing possible signs of too much red light with long flower stems that did not stand upright.



Optimara Affection (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).

Conclusion

Full Spectrum Plus LED lights produced more blooms faster with more vibrant colors for most African violet hybrids I grew. Plants under these lights required fewer hours of light than did control plants. The foliage grew flatter and smaller in most hybrids.

Some plants responded the same in both environments. I did not lose any of my plants due to excessive blooming for extended times. All comparison side-by-side photos are of hybrid plants of the same age. I would recommend using something to shield your eyes from looking directly at the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights if they are at eye level. These lights could be a great addition to any collection; each hybrid reacts differently to different lights.

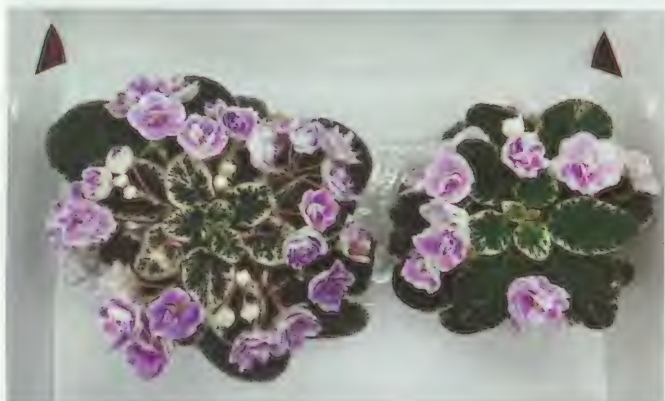
■ Sam Cunningham

I am retired, a hobby grower of African violets, and a member of the AVSA and The Gesneriad Society. I enjoy research and development, which flows right into my hobby. Unafraid of making big change, and thinking outside my box, I started the Houston African Violet and Gesneriad Society a little over a year ago with the help of some great club friends.

I like growing hard-to-find African violets and other gesneriads, and have recently started hybridizing African violets. I'm always ready for a good experiment.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to compare Full Spectrum Plus LED tubes with my standard growing methods using LED shop lights to weigh the benefits of the far-red spectrum — which has proven positive with orchid growing — for growing African violets.



Buckeye Seductress (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).



Optimara Little Moonstone (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).



Key Lime Treat (left: control; right: Full Spectrum Plus).

The study began late in October 2020 and lasted 3 to 4 months.

Methods

I grew eight young plants getting ready to bloom, using identical conditions other than the lighting. I have explained below — with comparison photos to follow — my opinion of the pros and cons of each light source.

Originally, I intended to use three different plants in three different growing mediums on three different stands with different lighting combinations. I had also incorporated noticeably young hybrid seedlings from my own crosses, but quickly learned the high-red spectrum LEDs were doing nothing but burning my new plants. I switched those with duplicate plants that were just starting to bloom, and paired down to just two light sources, Group A and Group B, for a more simplified study on growth of these plants.

Plant samples

- Mac's Misty Meadow
- Senk's Blue Cascade
- Senk's Fruit Fly
- Honey Puff
- Mac's Elegant Emerald
- Jolly Orchid
- SK-Novaya Zhizn
- LE-Mindal'noe Pirojnoye

Subject Group A

- Light Source: Two 4-foot Full Spectrum Plus LED tubes
- Foot Candles: 543 x 10 (5,530) using the Dr. Meter LX1330B digital light meter.
- 9 hours of light on automatic Nexia thermostat controller.
- Distance from top of plants to Lights: 10 inches.
- Temperature/humidity: Nexia Wi-Fi thermostat controller. Monitored with AcuRite 00325 indoor thermometer/hygrometer 68 degrees, humidity 48 percent at night and 72 degrees, with humidity at 60 percent in daytime.
- Watering method: RO filtered, and wicked with synthetic yarn on 2020 trays and light diffuser panels.
- Fertilizer: Grow More 20-10-20 urea-free orchid food 1/4 tsp per gallon.

Subject Group B (Control)

- Light Source: Sunco 4-foot dual tube 40W 5000K, 4500 Lumen Shop Light 2 units per shelf
- Foot Candles 135 10, or (1350) using the Dr. Meter LX1330B digital light meter.
- Hours of light: 9 on automatic Nexia thermostat controller
- Distance from top of plants to lights: 10 inches
- Temperature/humidity: Nexia Wi-Fi thermostat controller. Monitored with AcuRite 00325 indoor thermometer/hygrometer 68 degrees, humidity 48 percent at night and 72 degrees, 60 percent humidity in daytime.
- Watering method: RO filtered and wicked with synthetic yarn on 2020 trays and light diffuser panels.
- Fertilizer: Grow More 20-10-20 urea-free Orchid Food 1/4 tsp per gallon.

Comparisons

Specimens from both groups flourished during the period from November 3, 2020, to January 20, 2021. It appears the plants in group A (Full Spectrum Plus) grew smaller, produced less foliage than those in the control group, and had noticeably sparser blooms with longer peduncles.



SK-Novaya Zhizn (top) and Honey Puff (bottom), each grown under Full spectrum LED lights (left) and LED shop lights (right).



LE-Mindal'noe Pirojnoye (top) and Senk's Fruit Fly (bottom), each grown under Full spectrum LED lights (left) and LED shop lights (right).

Group A did not do well with foliage production and in some cases tended to cause burn on the leaves. Group B appears to have grown more compact, with shorter peduncles and more abundant blooms.

Conclusion

I feel that although the study was done in a short amount of time, the comparisons are notable. I would like to recommend a different study with a more structured set of protocols for the research. I would consider using the Full Spectrum Plus LED lights for a long-term project to look at benefits of fast-forwarding bloom growth on well-established plants rather than young plants, perhaps even in looking at a possible difference in bloom color and size.

In the end, I think I will be keeping my standard shop lights plugged in.

■ Minh Bui

I received a PhD in plant genetics in 2009 but left the plant world to pursue DNA and cancer research at the National Institutes of Health. Plants remain a passion since I was a child, but I only started actively growing African violets in 2017 and participated in my first show at the Buffalo convention in 2018. Today, I am

an active member of 15 plant clubs, president of one, and chair/director in various committees.

Methods

I sought to use the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs, which contain a maxed-out blue and red portion of the spectrum, with the added bonus of far-red light. Scientific literature reports that red and far red have a positive influence on flower and chlorophyll production but also can lead to the shade effect, causing etiolation (pale or bleached leaves from excluded sunlight) or hyperextended stems and petioles. Find a spectral comparison of the different lights including natural, fluorescent, LEDs and the Full Spectrum Plus can be found at my blog: <https://millennialplantdr.com/nextgen-lighting-spike-producer/>.

- Test group: Full Spectrum Plus LEDs - two bulbs; day length: 8.5 hours; distance to canopies: 9 to 12 inches.

- Control group: 4-foot T5HO LEDs: one 3000K, one 6400K, and one UV-A/blacklight (Barrina UV LED Blacklight Bar, 22w, 4 ft, T5); daylength: 6.5 hours; distance to canopies: 7 to 10 inches.

Introduction

There are a few hybrids I have never grown successfully due to my biased preference toward high-blue 6400K daylight bulbs. I tend to prefer higher blue ratios to promote growth, shorter petioles and internodal distances, but not all African violets enjoy that setup. I hypothesized that a few Buckeyes (a series I have not had success with) prefer a warmer



Buckeye Nostalgia grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.

(more red) or spectrally balanced (equivalent red and blue) light source, and could benefit from an added far-red bonus. After many failed attempts at growing Buckeyes, the one I grew under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs has been my most successful so far.

With more than 15,000 African violet hybrids, one would expect that this diversified gene pool likely includes plants that are hypersensitive to the far-red spectrum. I hypothesized that high-blue light lovers will do poorly under the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs, resulting in hyperextended petioles and poor growth compared to one that I grow with higher blue.



EK-Golubio grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs (left) and control lights (right).

In the photo, the African violet on the left is grown with one each of 3000K, 6400K, and UV-A bulbs (details in my article, *UV: Feared and Forgotten*, *AVM*, March/April 2021).

The plant on the right in the photo is a propagated plant from the mother on the left, and is grown using the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs. As shown, the

foliage on the left plant remains compact and symmetrical, while the one on the right has foliage that is constantly reaching with long petioles. However, the one on the right is constantly blooming, which can often lead to delayed growth.

Having a diverse
plant collection
requires a diverse
lighting system.

The added benefit of having far-red in one's growing regimen is not to be disregarded. The plants bloom quite often and even prematurely on young plants, which can have a negative impact on foliage growth.

For the hobby grower, a fully established plant supplemented with Full Spectrum Plus LEDs can yield a stand of blooms for many of the African violets in the collection.

For the show grower, I find one will have to disbud more frequently, and if growing a high-blue lover (like the one in the second photo), this lighting system might not work for that plant. I will continue to showcase African violets grown to their peak on social media, and will be sure to note that they were grown under Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.

Having a diverse plant collection requires a diverse lighting system. One light does not fit all.

Tips and Techniques: Design Bubbles

By Karyn Cichocki Lafayette, New Jersey

I recently put together an underwater arrangement for a local African violet council virtual show and I just used our tap well water. I took the first picture (left, below) right after I filled the container and the second picture the next morning.

Other than one of the grapevine pieces coming loose, the other difference is how many bubbles formed, which doesn't happen with distilled water. I also think the bubbles might mean that the minerals and/or

chemicals in the water might be reacting to the materials used in the arrangement.

If I had placed this in a show, I would have taken something clean and gently passed it along the inside front glass to eliminate the bubbles there. Note: judges are not supposed to deduct points for air bubbles in underwater arrangements, but they will see your design more clearly without them.



Photo 1. The underwater arrangement immediately after filling with tap water.



Photo 2. The same arrangement the next morning, filled with bubbles from the tap water.



Registration Report

By Joe Brunns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ Stephen Covolo — Springville, CA

Steffano's Early Frost

- (11321) 03/13/2021 •S. Covolo
- Single-semidouble white pansy/random green edge.
- Medium green, plain, quilted, serrated.
- Standard.

■ Wesley Carter — Portland, OR

Wesley's Forest Dancer

- (11322) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Semidouble white and green bell.
- Variegated medium green and white, pointed, serrated. •Miniature.

Wesley's Leprechaun Parade

- (11323) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Single white sticktite wasp/green edge.
- Variegated light green and white, pointed.
- Miniature.

Wesley's Little Abomination

- (11324) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Double green and white wasp.
- Medium-dark green, pointed. •Miniature.

Wesley's Whimsical Whirlwind

- (11325) 03/27/2021 •W. Carter
- Semidouble light pink wasp.
- Medium-dark green, pointed, glossy.
- Miniature.

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received March 1, 2021, through April 30, 2021 Total: \$360

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

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African Violet Terms

Adapted from Dorothy Kosowsky, 2004

■ Society Terminology:

African Violet Magazine: Member publication of the African Violet Society of America, published six times a year. Also referred to as AVM.

AVML, African Violet Master Variety List: A series of volumes listing all registered and many non-registered varieties of African violets.

AVSA: African Violet Society of America, incorporated in 1947, with amateur and commercial grower members from around the world.

AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors and Judges: This handbook contains the rules and regulations for African violet shows, judges, judging, plus other valuable information for exhibitors and growers.

Master List: See AVML.

■ Plants and Plant Care

Acidic (acid) soil: Soil that has a pH of less than 7.0.

Alkaline soil: Soil that has a pH greater than 7.0.

Anther: One or more sacks that contains the pollen.

Artificial Light: Light other than that provided by the sun.

Axil: The angle formed at the juncture of the petiole and the main stem.

Bell: Single blossoms with a bell shape.

Bloom stalk: Peduncle, pedicel, petal, etc.

Calyx: The cup-like base of a blossom. This external part is usually green in contrast to the inner showy portion composed of colored petals.

Capillary action: The movement of water upward, either by a wick or matting in contact with the plant container.

Chlorophyll: The green pigment found in the chloroplasts, necessary in the absorption of light for use in photosynthesis.

Chromosome: Microscopic, rod-like structure composed of individual units (genes) that pass on the plant's characteristics.

Condition: The cultural appearance of a plant, including an exhibit at the time of judging.

Crown: The head of the plant above the soil line. African violets are described as having single or multiple crowns.

Cultivar: The term most commonly refers to an assemblage of plants selected for desirable characteristics that are maintained during propagation. Through common usage, the word "cultivar" and "variety" often are seen as interchangeable.

Disbudding: Removal of the flower buds or bud stems to delay blooming for a later time.

Division: The cutting or gently pulling apart of a plant having two or more crowns.

Double-potting: The placement of a plant, still in its smaller pot, within a larger pot with the space between the two pots filled with soil mix.

Drench: To wet to the point of saturation.

Fertilizer: An enriching material used in soil (or soil-less mix) to increase soil productivity. Major elements of fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium. Secondary elements include sulfur, calcium, and magnesium.

Flared-top pot: A pot designed with an extended lip that serves as an additional support to the foliage.

Floriferousness: The quantity of bloom on a plant.

Foliage: The collective leaves of a plant.

Humidity: The ratio of water vapor held in the air, beneficial to plant growth.

Hybrid: A plant grown from seed as a result of breeding or cross-pollinating.

Hybridization: Using the pollen from one African violet and transferring it to the stigma of another violet to produce a progeny, or offspring, with qualities from both parent plants.

Hybridizer: One who breeds or cross-pollinates plants.

Leach: To pour a quantity of plain water through the soil of a plant to flush away accumulated fertilizer salts and neutralize alkaline buildup.

Leaf cutting: A leaf, plus a portion of the petiole, cut from a plant and used for propagating purposes.

Mutant: see Sport.

Neck: A plant that has lost leaves from the lower portion of the plant, exposing the main stalk above the potting mixture.

Ovary: The flower's reproductive part. in which the seed develops; at the base of the pistil.

Pasteurize: To raise the temperature of the soil or potting mix (or one of the components thereof) to 180 degrees F and maintain that temperature for 30 minutes for the purpose of removing harmful pathogens.

Pathogen: Any agent that causes disease; a virus or a microorganism such as a bacterium or fungus.

Peduncle: The stem, or stalk, that supports a flower cluster. Located near the crown of the plant, the peduncles develop between the leaves.

Pedicel: The stem that supports the individual buds or blossoms in a bloom cluster. Pedicels grow from a peduncle.

Petal: One of each individual segments of a bloom.

Petiole: The stem that attaches the leaf to the main stem.

Photosynthesis: The production of food in plants through a complex chemical reaction involving light, water, and carbon dioxide.

Pistil: The seed-bearing female portion of the flower that consists of ovaries, style, and stigma.

Plantlet: An immature plant; either still on the "mother" leaf or potted individually.

Plant types: African violet plant types include miniature, semiminature, standard, and large in single crown or trailers.

Pollen: The fertile yellow powder released from the anther.

Progeny: The offspring of any type of cross.

Propagate: To produce, or cause to produce, new plants.

Rooted clump: A term used by commercial growers that refers to a group of plantlets attached to the leaf cutting (mother leaf).

Rosette: A cluster of leaves radiating symmetrically from a central stem.

Seedling: A young plant grown from seed.

Sepal: Individual segments, similar to petals, covering the bloom, part of the calyx.

Slip-potting: Placing a plant into a clean pot of the same size to hide any disfigurement or dirt on the pot.

Species: A subdivision of a genus (Gesneriaceae), i.e., *Streptocarpus* or *Saintpaulia*.

Sphagnum moss: A long-fibered moss in a less decomposed state than that of sphagnum peat moss. It is often used in its natural, unmilled state as a growing medium for plants in hanging baskets.

Sport: Plants that have developed new features not seen in the parent plant. This can occur naturally or be chemically induced.

Stamen: A stalk or filament bearing an anther at its tip to hold the pollen.

Starter plants: Immature plants in small pots (usually 2 1/2") are sometimes referred to as "starter plants" by commercial growers.

Stem: The main stalk or trunk of a plant.

Stigma: A sticky receptive surface to which pollen adheres; part of the pistil.

Style: This elevates the stigma into a favorable position for pollen collection, part of the pistil.

Sucker: The beginning of a new plant that forms near the base of a plant or in the lower axils.

Symmetry: The shape of the plant. In rosette types of African violets, the leaves should radiate from the center of the plant like spokes on a wheel. The degree of perfect duplication and overlapping of the foliage evenly spaced around the main stem of the plant. It includes straight petioles with each layer of leaves progressively larger than the preceding layer.

Systemic: Relating to the entire plant system, not a single part. A systemic chemical is a substance that, when absorbed by plant tissue, causes the tissue to be poisonous to certain pests and diseases. Soil drenching is the usual method of induction.

Tissue culture: Test tube propagation using a culture medium and producing hundreds of plants from a minute piece of plant tissue.

Vermiculite: A sterile, lightweight, brownish, soft-textured, pebbly material. It is manufactured from crushed mica ore expanded to many times its original size through intense heat.

Wetting agent: A solution that is mixed with water to reduce the surface tension that causes water to bead.

Wicking: Any material used to draw water from a reservoir into the soil of a potted plant.

Spraying Insecticide in My Birthday Suit

By Dale Martens Davenport, Iowa

I found several plastic “Happy Birthday” tablecloths on a sales table. It’s my odd thinking that gave me the idea to use a 50-cent bargain as a protective cover while I sprayed insecticide on my plants. For whatever reason — although I keep windows shut in the basement where my plants grow — spring weather seems to bring thrips, and products with spinosad help control them.



All dressed up and ready to spray. (The red area on my forehead is my bangs and I don’t worry about them getting chemicals because I shower immediately after spraying.)

I always remove flowers before spraying because they can harbor thrips.

I always remove flowers before spraying because they can harbor thrips. I cut a hole in the tablecloth that was not quite large enough to slide over my head, but I still could see clearly enough what I wanted to spray. In addition to the tablecloth, I wore plastic gloves, safety glasses, two masks, and long sleeves.

I turned off the fans in the room and went to work spraying under and on top of leaves. When finished, I closed the door to the plant room and stayed away from it for 24 hours. I repeated this effort in 3 days to catch newly hatched thrips. Research finds that the thrips life cycle lasts from 7 to 14 days, depending on room temperature. My husband took my photo before I began spraying and joked that I’d be spraying in my “birthday suit.”



Photo Credit: Winston J. Goretsky

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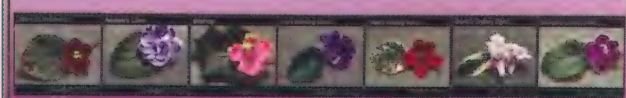
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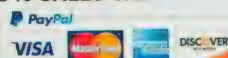
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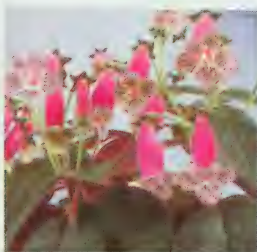
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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 74 Number 5

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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Susan Anderson

4040 E. Maldonado Dr. • Phoenix, Arizona

Email: president@avsa.org

Autumn is coming! I must remember this. Yet, I am impatient and urge the thermometer to dip, without success. I must wait. The summer heat will eventually give way to cooler temps. And when it does, my violets will burst to life, pushing up blossoms to brighten my home. Yes, autumn is my favorite time of year. It will be here soon.

Cooler weather means I can finally place orders with commercial growers and get some new plants. There are only a few weeks each year when the temperatures are suitable for shipping plants to Arizona, so I will take advantage. I have my wish list ready to go.

After the long summer recess, September ushers in a flurry of activity for our local clubs. Affiliates are returning to meeting regularly. This is especially rewarding for those clubs that have not met face-to-face due to the pandemic. It is an absolute thrill to gather together and catch up. Virtual meetings just do not compare to being able to meet in person. Many local clubs are accommodating the needs of their members by hosting in-person meetings while also offering virtual options. We are remaining connected by all means possible.

Shows and sales are filling the calendar as local affiliates make plans. These events are terrific opportunities to teach the public about the joy of growing African violets. Enthusiasm is contagious, and you will likely gain a new member or two when you spend a few minutes sharing your tips for growing healthy, happy plants. We all enjoy learning something new. Welcome those that are curious to your next club meeting.

No local affiliate nearby? It may be time to start a club. You are probably not alone; African violet lovers are everywhere! It just takes a few motivated people to get a local club going. AVSA offers tools

and resources to assist start-ups. Several affiliates have recently had successful initiations and can share lessons learned. Contact AVSA for additional information.

Now is a good time to ensure your membership information is current with AVSA. A new membership management system, iMIS, has been implemented at the office and all members can now establish their personal accounts. Once you are set up, you may access the members-only content, pay dues and order materials directly through the AVSA website. Please sign up or call the office for assistance if you have not set up your account yet.

The AVSA Board is preparing for a full year of business. Committee chairs have been appointed and are working on numerous projects. Now is an opportune time to get involved and support these important efforts. Just like local affiliates, AVSA relies on our volunteers to make things happen. You can make a difference! Join a committee today. AVSA is always seeking volunteers and welcomes your skills and contributions. Consider challenging yourself, applying your talents and making an impact.

For those with leadership aspirations, AVSA is currently accepting applications for the Board of Directors. Each year, five candidates are nominated and elected to join the board. Directors play an important role by representing the membership at business meetings, voicing concerns, voting on motions and bringing forth ideas for improving our society. Please consider applying or encouraging someone who would be a good candidate to join the leadership ranks of AVSA. I can attest that serving AVSA is an especially rewarding experience.

Happy growing, showing and sharing!



Editor's Notes

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

I've had so much fun — and learned so much — working on my first issue of *African Violet Magazine*. Not the least of these lessons is that this is a wonderful organization full of supportive, dedicated people. I look forward to strengthening these relationships and getting to know you over the coming years.

For this issue, we were able to take several questions that were raised during the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention and answer them. During one of the Cocktail Hour events, a handful of people asked for suggestions on African violets that are ideal for warm or cool climates. In response, we've updated an article Dr. Jeff Smith wrote on this topic back in 1996 and included it as part of our 75th anniversary series. You will find it on page 10.

Another topic that came up at the convention was hybridizing. For beginners (like me), this can seem like a daunting topic. Jere Trigg was kind enough to put together an extensive "hybridizing 101" piece for the website. We've given you a taste of what he said beginning on page 56. If you want to dive deeper into this topic (and many others), make sure you visit www.africanvioletsofamerica.org. There is a lot of terrific content on the AVSA website.

With in-person shows starting to ramp up again, many of you may be thinking about your next competition entries. Linda Hall is a master of underwater design and shared several tips for crafting beautiful creations in this tricky category. Don't miss her ideas and beautiful photographs on page 42.

This issue contains many of the features you're used to seeing. Vladimir Kalgin profiles an important Russian hybridizer, Eugeny Arkhipov, on page 20. Paul Kroll has a fascinating story about growing *Columnnea pupusii* similar to a bonsai tree so it can be used in designs (page 22). Sprinkled throughout the magazine are dazzling photos of newly-introduced violets and other gesneriads from this year's convention. There are also plenty of updates about what's happening with your society.

My goal is to continue to provide meaty, information-packed pieces that will make growing African violets more enjoyable for you. That being said, I'd also like to introduce some new ideas. For example, as a long-time environmentalist, I was excited to write an article about compost and African violets, which I hope you'll enjoy reading on page 48. I'd like to continue to write about eco-friendly topics such as this, as well as answer the questions that are on your mind.

Correction: July/August 2021 AVM

On page 55, the paragraphs under the photo caption should read: In the photo, the African violet on the RIGHT is grown with one each of 3000K, 6400K and UV-A bulbs (details in my article, *UV: Feared and Forgotten*, *AVM*, March/April 2021). The plant on the LEFT in the photo is a propagated plant from the mother on the RIGHT, and is grown using the Full Spectrum Plus LEDs.





AVSA Office Update

By Amy Carruth

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Email: avsa@earthlink.net

I hope everyone has had a chance to log in to the new website. Several of our members' email addresses are incorrect or no longer active, and this will prevent you from logging into your account. Please do not create a new account if you are already a member. If you have any trouble logging into your member account, please contact the office for assistance.

We are still having trouble receiving all of our mail here at the office. Therefore, we are not receiving all the renewal payments. Please make sure your membership is current by logging into your account on the website. Paying your dues online will ensure we receive your renewal in a timely manner.

We are now heading into fall, when clubs will hopefully start meeting again. Please make sure your club's information is up to date on the website as well as with the office. If your club needs insurance for your meeting, please email the office at avsa@earthlink.net.

The cost for insurance is \$6 per member and will need to be paid before issuing a certificate.

We still have several back issues of *African Violet Magazine* available for the cost of postage. These are great to bring to your meetings and shows, where you can pass them out to new members and help promote AVSA. Around 25 to 30 magazines can fit in a flat rate box for \$15.50. You can purchase these by contacting the office.

If you have missed a magazine, please contact us as soon as possible so we can make sure you are up to date. Renewal notices are also being sent by email. Please be on the lookout for those as well.

With 278 attendees, the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention this year was a great success. I hope everyone had fun. We look forward to seeing all of you in person in Little Rock, Arkansas, next year.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

We would love to hear from you! Please send articles or article ideas for the *AVM* to Sophia Bennett at editor@avsa.org.

AVSA Open Forum 2021

By Mary Corondan, Former Acting Secretary

Email: firstvp@avsa.org

The Open Forum is held at the AVSA Convention immediately following the Annual Business Meeting. This provides a question-and-answer session for the membership regarding AVSA operating procedures. Although the Open Forum was not held in 2020, Zoom made it possible this year. Below are the items that were discussed.

1. Why has First Class for Android disappeared?

Glenda Williams answered that the OS (operating system) for Androids was recently updated. This required the First Class for Android app to be updated to the new Android OS. Google Play Store monitors apps and flags any that may need updating to the newest OS version. First Class for Android is currently in this process of being updated through the Technology Committee. We don't currently have a rollout date, but we are hoping it will be the end of June. Watch the website for the status of updating the app. Hopefully, it will be a free update for our current subscribers. This is ultimately handled by Google and is out of our control. The First Class for Android app is still operational for those who currently have it, but you are not able to update it or renew your subscription.

2. A member purchased First Class for Mac and has been unable to get it to download properly. What is the next step?

Contact David Kesler directly for help. For those who order it from the AVSA Store, Winston Goretsky has been sending the ZIP file directly to users in a different format. Stephen Covolo stated that it works fine. It is a cloud-based application that automatically updates.

3. Ron Davidson asked why AVSA does not have term limits for committee chairs.

Susan Anderson answered that we are limited in the number of volunteers we have. Some are currently

serving multiple roles. Joyce Stork said this question came up during her term as president. There was no interest in proceeding with term limits at that time, and it hasn't been brought up since. Winston Goretsky said that each new president has the option of appointing new committee chairs when they take office. A new president comes in every two years and asks each committee chair if they wish to continue, or a new chair can be appointed.

4. Candace Baldwin thanked all of those who donated items for the auction.

Between the live and silent auctions, AVSA generated a profit of \$2,096.

5. Maida den Oudsten thanked all those involved in the fabulous virtual convention.

It has been a wonderful experience.

6. Jill Jensen watched Rich Follett's wonderful presentation on AVSA, and she was wondering what our current membership is.

Winston said the current membership is 3,934. Since January, we have increased by 461 members. It has been requested that we post the current membership on the website. There are 277 people registered for the convention.

7. Pam Orris was wondering if there would be a virtual option for future conventions.

President Sue Ramser said this will be taken under advisement.

8. Jill Jensen asked, as a Director, if it is possible to get the names of AVSA members in the area so they can contact them directly and invite them to local affiliate meetings.

If you contact the office, you may be able to get a list from your zip code. Due to privacy issues, unless members indicate their information can be shared,

we cannot give out information. Stephen Covolo stated you can contact affiliate leaders about getting their members to join AVSA. Winston said that we cannot solicit people directly for certain things through Mailchimp. If members make an AVSA Store purchase, we cannot solicit them for membership. Our only communication with them must be regarding their purchase. Lola Sutherland clarified that Stephen Covolo was thinking of getting affiliate members to be AVSA members, whereas Jill Jensen was asking to contact AVSA members to join affiliates.

10. 2021 Cyber Diamond Convention comment.

Thanks to all of those who were responsible for this convention. It was so well done. It was as if we were at a live convention. Bingo was thoroughly enjoyed,

as was searching for the Blue Boy blossoms during the scavenger hunt. The hope is that a virtual option will be available for future conventions. Thanks to Linda Hall, who did a great job as auctioneer, as well as Sharon Shannon, who coordinated the Zoom sessions.

Amy Carruth said hello to everyone and thanked those who were involved in the Cyber Convention. She stated that there have been many positive comments.

Winston Goretsky said Bill Price had spine surgery on May 27 and his pain level is greatly reduced. Sue Ramser said to send Bill our wishes for his speedy recovery.

The Open Forum was adjourned.



Photo Credit: Yana Khodchenko

Hodss-Roses

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: Y. Khodchenko
Miniature



Rich Follett to Serve as AVSA Secretary

The African Violet Society of America is excited to welcome Rich Follett as the Secretary of the Board of Directors. Follett joined AVSA as a Life Member in 2002 at the Washington, D.C., convention and hit the ground running. In the years since he joined the Society, he has served on the Board of Directors and various committees, written dozens of articles, authored a column for *African Violet Magazine*, survived a turn as a National Convention Chair (Cherry Hill, New Jersey, 2011) and

hybridized a registered variety or two. He is currently taking his first Senior Judges exam. Along the way, he has made friendships to last a lifetime and instigated no small amount of mischief. Despite expert coaching and state-of-the-art support from AVSA friends far and near, he still cannot get an African violet to bloom on schedule for a national show, even with fervent prayer and painstaking attention to detail. He remains undeterred.



And the Winners Are ...

By Mary Corondan

434 Plumwood Way • Fairview, TX 75069

Email: winners@avsa.org

■ Glitter Gultch African Violet Growers, Nevada — Winners:

- Best AVSA Standard Collection: Optimara Monet, Rhapsodie Michelle II, Whirligig Star; Best Standard, Optimara Monet; Best Gesneriad: *Pearcea hypocyrtiflora*, **Richard Craft**.
- Best in Show/Best Trailer: Rob's Wagga Wagga, **Shawn Edwards**.

- Best Semiminiature: Shirl's Cranberry Smoothie; Design Sweepstakes, **Joyce Stork**.
- Best Miniature: Jolly Orchid; Best Design, **Anna Lammersen**.
- Best Species: *S. 5i* clone *velutinus* lite; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Mark Romansky**.

2021 Convention

Cocktail Hours and Bingo Game

By Sharon Shannon Email: thirdvp@avsa.org

At the risk of repeating what many have already said, this past year has been tough on all of us. To top it off, one of the things we look forward to the most, our beloved annual convention, was cancelled ... again. So, what do we do when we absolutely can't meet in person? We meet online!

One of the fun things the Cyber Convention Committee really wanted to do was include some social time. We decided to have two two-hour cocktail social hours on three nights of convention week and invite a special guest to each. Beth Baker and I were tasked with making that happen.

Our first special guests were Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, award-winning growers and hybridizers and owners of the Violet Barn. They gave us a wonderful presentation that included a rare view into their growing area. They explained their setup with their plant stands and lights and gave us some background on their business.

Our next guest was Sandra Skalski, award-winning grower, author of the "Your First Violets" column in the *AVM* and wonderful teacher. She answered many questions for our attendees regarding growing, culture, how to get symmetry after a plant has been in full bloom, damaged roots and growing trailers. It's so educational to speak directly to an expert.

Dr. Jeff Smith, botanist, college professor and author of the "In Search of New Violets" column in the *AVM*, answered many questions about his background, interests and hybridizing. Specific questions came in about hybridizing for yellow and orange violets and crossing African violets with *Streptocarpus* or other gesneriads.

Next up was Ken Muzalewski, award-winning grower, hybridizer of the Hunter's series of African violets and

seller. Ken talked with us about his growing conditions, fertilizer, pest control and hybridizing. He explained how he keeps his growing area clean and pest free and how he handles seeds.

Dianne Duggan is the artist for the blossom and leaf illustrations in the upcoming "Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges." Her beautiful illustrations are all done by hand with colored pencils and took her between 300 and 400 hours to complete. She discussed various blossom and leaf types, her art and how she got interested in African violets.

Our last guests were Kathy Hajner and Stephen Covolo. Kathy and Stephen are both award-winning growers, hybridizers (Kathy of the K's series violets and Stephen of the Steffano's series violets and *Streptocarpus*) and sellers. They talked to us about storing seed pods, what reverse fantasy is and how a product called the VegiBee can be used to pollinate plants.

Besides visiting with our special guests, we did Zoom breakout rooms with groups of five or six people in some of our cocktail hours. This gave us the opportunity to get to know people on a more personal basis, which was a lot of fun.

During the convention, we also did a live bingo game with 121 attendees. We played four games, and the prize for each winner was to be the first to enter the sales room at the 2022 Convention. Congratulations to the winners!

I would like to thank Beth Baker for being my partner in crime; our special cocktail hour guests for sharing their time; the bingo team of Krissa Bruck, Bobbi Johannsen, Suzanne Myers and Rich Follett; and Joyce Stork for being our lead in these activities.

75th Anniversary: Warm vs. Cool Climate Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith Muncie, Indiana

Email: jsmith4@bsu.edu

When many of us think about the homeland of the African violet, we tend to envision rich rain forests and jungles. In our mind's eye, we see areas where plants grow densely in deep soil along streambeds and air filled with humidity and warmth. When we grow the African violet species in our homes, we often try to duplicate these conditions by providing warmth and humidity.

However, not all African violet species are from areas with high humidity and warmth. Some are from much cooler habitats. The best success with the species occurs when the grower matches the plant to the original habitat.

The first section of this article looks at African violet species that do particularly well in warmer places. The second section details plants that will be happier in locations that provide cooler growing conditions.

Violets for warm conditions

Streptocarpus ionanthus (formerly *Saintpaulia ionantha*). This is the species the world has generally come to know as “the African violet.” Most of today’s African violet cultivars grow well under warm conditions because they are the descendants of this species. It was recognized and described as a new species by H. Wendland in 1893.

S. ionanthus has been collected in several places in Tanzania, including the Sigi Caves and Cliffs, where it grows on rock ledges and among boulders. It is also found in the vicinity of the Amboni caves near Tanga, which may have been the source of Baron von St. Paul’s original plants and/or seed. This species is found near sea level or at other lowland sites, giving it the characteristic of growing well in warm habitats.

There have been a number of different color forms reported for this species, including the clone white

ionanthus or Mather No. 20. It requires the same growing conditions as the parent species.

Streptocarpus ionanthus
is the species the
world has generally
come to know as
“the African violet.”

Another interesting clone of *S. ionanthus* is the clone known as Sigi Falls. It was collected from the sides of a waterfall on the Sigi River in the coastal area of Tanzania. This plant is a slow grower and does well in warm conditions. It is a relatively shy bloomer, and success in getting it to flower may be related to increasing the temperature, day length or humidity.

***Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *grandifolius* cl. *grandifolius* No. 237** (formerly *Saintpaulia grandifolia* No. 237). This plant has been one of the most popular species plants in collections. It was collected by W.R. Punter in the West Usambara Mountains of Tanzania and was described by B.L. Burtt in 1958. The only thing mentioned about the habitat was that it was found in a steep valley. The elevation of the collection site was not reported; however, this species grows best under warm conditions, suggesting it was found at lower elevations. It will enjoy any extra heat and humidity you provide, but keep good air circulation around the plant to avoid mildew problems.

Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *grotei* cl. *magungensis (formerly *Saintpaulia magungensis*). This

is one of the trailing species that requires warm growing conditions. The plant was collected in the East Usambara Mountains near Magunga, Tanzania, and was described by E. Roberts in 1950. The elevation and habitat were not given; however, this species does appear to grow best in warm temperatures and good humidity, indicating it was collected at lower elevations.

Another clone of this species, often called *S. magungensis* variety *minima*, was described by B.L. Burt in 1964. It was collected by W.R. Punter from the East Usambara Mountains, on the Mavoera estate near Amani, Tanzania. *S. magungensis* variety *minima* can make a beautiful miniature trailing plant, but it is somewhat difficult to grow well because it seems to require a higher humidity than other African violets. It does, however, do well in greenhouse conditions.

Streptocarpus rupicolus (formerly *Saintpaulia rupicola*). This species was collected by W.R. Punter in 1958 and described by B.L. Burt in 1964. It is one of the few African violets that is found in Kenya rather than Tanzania. The habitat for this species is in the crevices of bare rocks at low elevations in the coastal areas. These habitats often have low humidity, which may explain why this species is easy to grow in homes.

The main concern in growing this species is to provide adequate drainage to avoid rot. It is also more sensitive to damage from pesticide use compared to other species, so care must be given in treating this plant for pests.

The plant *S. rupicolus* cl. Kacharoroni (or Robertson) was collected at an elevation of 540 feet in the Vitengeni River Gorge, Kilifi area, on the coast of Kenya by A. Robertson and Q. Luke. This elevation is one of the lowest known for an African violet, so it is not surprising that this plant requires warm growing conditions. It can also grow exceptionally large compared to other species of African violets, sometimes producing leaves that are over 5 inches across.

Streptocarpus ionanthus* subspecies *ionanthus* cl. *tongwensis (formerly *Saintpaulia tongwensis*). This warm-growing species was collected by Greenway in 1940 from the Tongwe Mountain in East Usambara,

Tanzania, and was described as a species by B.L. Burt in 1947. It was found at elevations of about 2,000 feet or lower, growing on gneiss rocks in a forest area.

This species is an excellent one to grow in a collection because it is one of the most floriferous of the species. It does well in warm growing conditions but does not seem particularly sensitive to humidity.

Tip: A good place to grow any of the warm species is the top shelf of a plant stand. Warm air rises and usually makes the top shelf several degrees warmer than shelves near the floor. Brightly-lit windows in bathrooms and kitchens, typically the warmest rooms in the house, may provide a good habitat for these plants. These areas may also have higher humidity, which will benefit plants like *S. magungensis* variety *minima*.

Placing plants closer to lights may also raise the temperature around them. Natural lighting often works well for the warm species; it produces higher temperatures because the sun's rays are more intense than artificial lighting.

Violets for cool conditions

Streptocarpus nitidus (formerly *Saintpaulia nitida*). If you only have space for one cool species, consider growing *S. nitidus*. This beautiful plant was collected in 1953 in the Nguru Mountains at an elevation of 3,300 feet. The habitat is described as being on rocks in shade by a forest stream. It will actually tolerate either warm or cool growing conditions, but the roots do not penetrate the soil very deeply, so good drainage must be provided. It does well on the lower, cooler shelves of a plant stand. It is a fairly floriferous species and will respond to high phosphate fertilizer treatments to promote blooming.

Streptocarpus goetzeanus (formerly *Saintpaulia goetzeana*). This species is one of the oldest known, having been originally collected in 1898. However, *S. goetzeanus* is not a common violet to find in collections because of its reputation as being hard to grow and reticent to flower.

The key to understanding this species is knowing that it was collected at high elevations of between 4,300 and 6,600 feet. It grows as a creeping herb on

mossy rock surfaces in the deep shade of upland rain forests. This is essentially a cloud forest habitat, so conditions cannot be easily reproduced in homes and greenhouses.

If you want to try growing this plant, make sure it remains at very cool temperatures and is covered with a dome for extra humidity. It will not grow well in a warm room and will quickly die if the temperature goes over 80 F. However, it does surprisingly well in locations where there are extreme temperature fluctuations between day and night. It can tolerate night temperatures as low as 40 F. Consider growing it in a location like a windowsill or unheated porch. As long as the temperature doesn't go below freezing, this plant can survive and grow quite well. The colder nights appear to be critical to bringing this species into flower.

S. goetzeanus is a very fine-rooted plant and must be grown in shallow containers with good drainage. Although it enjoys high humidity, drainage must be excellent or the roots and stems will rot. Try growing this species in a very porous soil mixture with lots of perlite to loosen the soil. Water frequently, but make sure the soil drains rapidly so the plant will not be standing in water.

Streptocarpus teitensis (formerly *Saintpaulia teitensis*). Another species with a reputation for being difficult to grow in cultivation is *S. teitensis*. It was collected in 1938 in the Teita Hills of Kenya and is the northernmost species of African violet known to date. Although the elevation of the collection habitat was not reported, this species is another that requires cooler temperatures.

S. teitensis grows best on the lowest shelves of a plant stand and would likely be another good candidate for a windowsill or unheated porch. The only time I have had this species flower is when the plants were grown under lights in an unheated basement. The temperatures never rose above 60 F and were sometimes as low as 40 F.

Streptocarpus ionanthus subspecies velutinus (formerly *Saintpaulia velutina*). The long hairs and rich red backing of the leaves of this species make an attractive and exotic combination. However, the

plant has a reputation for being finicky. It was collected in 1916 at an elevation of 3,000 feet in the West Usambara Mountains. The habitat was described as damp, rocky banks in a shady forest.

S. velutinus often grows better under cool rather than warm conditions. A good place for it is the lower shelf of a plant stand or at the end of a shelf, where the light intensity is lower. However, the real trick to growing this plant is to know that it is very sensitive to over-watering. It must have excellent drainage to survive. Use a very porous soil mixture, and water it less often than is usual for most African violets.

Streptocarpus ionanthus subspecies occidentalis cl. magungensis (formerly *S. magungensis* variety *occidentalis*). This plant was collected in 1959 in the West Usambara Mountains. It was found on a shaded stream bed, growing in soil but not rocks. While the elevation of the habitat was not given, this plant is very similar to *S. subspecies velutinus* in its temperature requirements. It grows well under cooler temperatures but stops growing or dies when temperatures are consistently over 80 F. Unlike *S. subspecies velutinus*, it is not particularly sensitive to soil drainage and will tolerate almost any soil mixture. Like *S. teitensis*, I have only had this plant flower under very cool nighttime temperatures.

Tip: If African violets in your collection are not doing well, check references to see where they were collected, especially the elevation of the habitat. Plants collected above 1,640 feet will usually do better under cool growing conditions. Try moving these plants to the lower shelf of a plant stand, windowsill, unheated porch or basement that is equipped with lights.

In addition, check the drainage of the soil. Many of the species were collected on rock faces and ledges and must have excellent soil drainage. A knowledge of the requirements of the species will improve your experience with them and make you glad to have them as part of your African violet collection.



AVSA Affiliate Update

By Jeri Anderson, Affiliate Chair

Email: affiliate@avsa.org

This September, AVSA seems to be in a happier place. Many clubs have gone back to their regular in-person meetings as members receive their COVID-19 vaccines. Quite a few clubs have updated their club information, and now clubs are posting upcoming events. These are good signs of getting back to normal.

It was sad to have our 75th anniversary convention be a virtual convention, but the convention team really outdid themselves. It was simply amazing to have an “almost real” experience. If you have an opportunity to speak with any of the convention committee members, be sure to let them know how much you appreciate the wonderful job they did. So many people shared their time and talents to make it all happen.

Our new AVSA website is up and ready for use. You can update your club information and enter events as before, but the pathways have changed. I encourage everyone to take some time to explore the new website and see if you can locate all of the pages you normally use.

To update your club information:

From the Home page, place your cursor on the Participate button. Select Find an Affiliate Club from the drop-down menu. Now, on the top portion of the Affiliate page, click on the Update Affiliate Club Information button. The Affiliate Update form will open for you to input your club's information.

To enter an event:

From the Home page, place your cursor on the Participate button. Select Event from the drop-down menu. On the top portion of the events page, click on Add An Event. The Event Information form will open for you to input your club's event information.

Our new AVSA website is up and ready for use. I encourage everyone to take some time to explore the new website and see if you can locate all of the pages you normally use.

We have a list of members working to start a club:

- Lyn Jones: Wadsworth, OH;
Email: happyviolets4you@gmail.com
- Mary Ann Markey: Port Charlotte, FL;
Email: drmaogrady@gmail.com
- Jennie Lawrence: Laramie, WY;
Email: missjennae@yahoo.com (Jennie also has a Facebook Group called African Violets in the Wyoming Area)
- Isabella Spina: Tallahassee, FL;
Email: bellaspina17@gmail.com (Isabella also has a Facebook Group called Tallahassee African Violets)

Hopefully someone will be interested in joining a club in one of these areas. If you are trying to start a new club in your area, please contact me for help.

There are several states that do not have even one African violet club. If you live in one of these states, please consider starting a local club.



Photo Credit: Margery Anderson-Clive

***Smithiantha* 'Malu's Show-Off'**

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: M. Anderson-Clive
Large



Photo Credit: Natalia and Sergey Burkatskaie

BR-Miriady

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by:
N. and S. Burkatskaie
Standard



Photo Credit: Natalia Danilova-Suvorova

ND-Roza Vostoka

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by:
N. Danilova-Suvorova
Standard

Hamid Asim's Albino African Violet Is Beautiful but Doomed

By Joyce Stork Henderson, Nevada

Email: joycestork@avsa.org

Without green, the world as we know it would not exist. In plants, green pigment is chlorophyll, an amazing compound that allows photosynthesis to use energy from the sun to convert carbon dioxide and water into sugars. Variegated hybrids have leaf patterns with some cells lacking chlorophyll. What happens if none of the cells have chlorophyll — if the plant is an albino? It is a rare occurrence.

In June of this year, Hamid Asim of Turkey shared a photo in the Facebook group African Violet Nerds showing an albino plant that had formed on a propagated leaf of 'Happy Harold'. He captioned the photo "Unhappy Harold — we are heading towards the inevitable end."



Cousins of Unhappy Harold.

Asim is a lecturer at Sakarya University working on a doctorate degree in management information systems. He has formed a group called the African Violet Academy "to ensure that the right information reaches the people who grow African violets." He personally grows about 400 hybrids and more than 1,500 plants. His albino plant has attracted a lot of attention in his group in Turkey as well as on Facebook.

Asim planted cuttings of 'Happy Harold' in June 2020. "This is the first time I've seen this anomaly,"

he says. "I saw the same problem in both leaves that I got from the same mother plant. For one year, this plant has lived attached to its mother.

After a year of growing, Asim is certain that the albino condition is genetic and not the result of a lack of nutrients or cold temperature.

"Unfortunately, the cousins of this plant did not survive. I accidentally dropped my phone on the other cutting and the mother leaf broke. After that, I separated the plantlets and planted them alone. Unfortunately, they died within two days. They cannot photosynthesize without chlorophyll."

The surviving plant was transplanted (with the mother leaf) to a larger pot. "In fact, the longer the mother survives, the longer the plantlet will live. Even though she doesn't live alone, I want to grow this beauty for a long time."

After a year of growing, Asim is certain that the albino condition is genetic and not the result of a lack of nutrients or cold temperature. He explains his culture: "My basic growing principle is that the growing mix must be sterile and free of foreign matter. Most importantly, I use the best quality of growing mix and nutrients. I use white sphagnum, coarse

perlite and small amounts of vermiculite in my growing mixes. At the bottom of the pots, I always have hydroton-like materials (clay pebbles) for good drainage. My water is good quality. I constantly measure the amount of nutrients in it. Since African violets are sensitive to pH, I change the mix every six months and replant them in fresh mix.

“My plants are generally very healthy because I pay attention to these basic rules. I also take light measurements constantly and try not to skip irrigation times ... If I have made a change in any variable about growing inputs, I make a note of it and observe the changes in the plant. In my opinion, working with this method, constantly following the light and nutritional needs of plants and their development, is the most important criteria for success.”



Hamid Asim's growing shelves.

Why Is the Plant Albino?

Dr. Jeff Smith believes the all-white phenomenon is the result of an absence of chloroplasts in the cells. Chloroplasts are organelles that exist within plant cells to produce energy. The chloroplasts are filled with the pigment chlorophyll. Plants will only be green if they have chloroplasts in their cells. When cells without chloroplasts divide, the resulting new cells will also lack chloroplasts.

Smith writes about Asim's plant, “It looks like the new baby started from a non-green cell and all the growth continued from that start. Baby plants often start from a single cell and may not inherit all of the traits of the mother leaf. The albino baby is a parasite on the mother leaf, depending on the parent leaf's ability to photosynthesize to get the nutrients and energy needed for growth. This is true for all

plantlets at least until they get large enough to do photosynthesis for themselves and ‘feed’ their own growth.

“Variegated babies often start out all white then develop some green coloring as they age. During that time, they are totally dependent on the mother leaf for nutrients and energy, just as Hamid's plant is doing. Most babies will eventually develop chloroplasts and start feeding themselves. Once Hamid's albino baby outstrips what the mother leaf can provide, it will die of starvation. It's a credit to Hamid's transplanting and excellent care that he was able to get the albino baby to its current size.”

Unhappy Harold's Future

Hamid knows that Unhappy Harold is doomed. “It grows very slowly and looks healthy. It has its own beauty and attracts people's attention. But the sad part is that it won't last long. Those who have had this experience before also stated that the plant would be short-lived. Therefore, the longer I can keep the mother leaf alive, the longer the plantlet will live.



Hamid Asim's Unhappy Harold June 2021.

“Sometimes we encounter such problems and there are many suggestions for a solution, but I believe this is part of the natural life cycle of these wonderful plants and I do not interfere too much. Finally, I will do my best to keep the mother leaf alive, as I do with every plant I have.”

Coming Events

Check the AVSA Events page (www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/events), search the local club on Facebook or contact the organizers listed below for the latest information on these events.

■ September 10-12, 2021 — Maryland

National Capital Area Chapter of the
Gesneriad Society

Show and Sale

Homestead Gardens

743 W. Central Ave.

Davidsonville, MD

Friday: 1-6 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Bill Schmidt: Danraybill@gmail.com

www.nationalcapitalgesneriads.org

■ September 11-12, 2021 — Wisconsin

Wisconsin Council of African Violet Clubs

Show and Sale

St. Jude the Apostle Church Hall

531 Knapp St.

Oshkosh, WI

Saturday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Kevin Degner: kevindegner7@yahoo.com

■ September 18, 2021 — Colorado

Rocky Mountain African Violet Council

Show and Sale

Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church gymnasium

10000 E. Bellevue Ave.

Englewood, CO

Saturday: 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Trudy Brekel: violetlady7@msn.com

■ September 18, 2021 — Tennessee

Memphis African Violet Society

Fall Sale

Central Christian Church

531 S. McLean Blvd.

Memphis, TN

Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Geneva Stagg: geneva.stagg@gmail.com

Beth Baker: bakerbethrn@gmail.com

www.facebook.com/memphisavs

■ September 18, 2021 — Texas

NASA Area African Violet Society

Fall Sale and Display

Bay Harbour United Methodist Church

3459 FM Rd 518 E.

League City, TX

Saturday: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Dianne Duggan: ddgcampbell@earthlink.net

■ October 2, 2021 — Florida

African Violet Council of Florida

Display and Sale

Christ Lutheran Church

2715 Lakeland Hills Blvd.

Lakeland, FL

Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Mary Jane DiLorenzo: mjdilo92@gmail.com

www.africanvioletcouncilofflorida.club

■ October 2, 2021 — Texas

Spring Branch African Violet Club

Annual Fall Sale

St. John Chrysostom Church

5402 Acorn St.

Houston, TX

Saturday: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Vickie Crider: vcriders52@outlook.com

■ **October 2-3, 2021 — Minnesota**

North Star African Violet Council
African Violet Show & Plant Sale
Bachman's Floral, Gift & Garden, Heritage Room
6010 Lyndale Ave. S
Minneapolis, MN
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Mary Kealy-Falk: mkealyfalk@aol.com

■ **October 8-9, 2021 — Nebraska**

Missouri Valley African Violet Council
Fall Show and Sale
DoubleTree by Hilton-Downtown
1616 Dodge St.
Omaha, NE
Friday: noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Randy Deutsch: rcjsch@prodigy.net
www.MVAVC.org

■ **October 22-23, 2021 — Arkansas**

Central Arkansas African Violet Society
Annual Fall Show and Sale
North Little Rock Community Center
2700 Willow St.
North Little Rock, AR
Friday: noon-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Danny Tidwell: dantwell@yahoo.com

■ **October 28-30, 2021 — Texas**

Lone Star African Violet Council
Show and Sale
Radisson Hotel at Fossil Creek
2540 Meacham Blvd.
Fort Worth, TX
Thursday: noon-5 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Saturday: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Janet Castiglione: 940-595-7417
jmcvioletcas@gmail.com
www.lsavc.org

■ **November 12-13, 2021 — Pennsylvania**

Mid-Atlantic African Violet Society
Show, Sale and Convention
Morgantown Holiday Inn
6170 Morgantown Road
Morgantown, PA
Friday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Sue Hoffmann: violetsue123@outlook.com
www.maavs.org



Registration Report

By Joe Brunns

1220 Stratford Lane • Hanover Park, IL 60133
Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ **Irena Tosev — Belegis, Serbia**

IT's In Your Name

- (11326) 04/27/2021 •I. Tosev
- Semidouble-double white frilled star/random splashes of pink with purple fantasy.

- Variegated medium green and white, ovate, glossy, serrated. •Small standard.



Eugeny Arkhipov, Master of Fantasy Hybridizing

By Vladimir Kalgin Moscow, Russia

Email: vkalgin@yahoo.com

Since hybridizing is a completely impossible task for me, I have great respect for the work of those who have the talent for it. For about 20 years of the Moscow House of Violets' existence, we have met many American and domestic hybridizers and are grateful to each of them for their contribution to the development of the African violet world.

In this column, I would like to tell you about my old friend Eugeny Arkhipov. He not only created unique varieties, but he has actively participated in the development of the House of Violets from the very first day, initiating and implementing many of our projects.

The House of Violets was established in July 2002. From the first days, Arkhipov offered trainings for growers on topics such as cultivation and hybridization. We published his book "Violets in Our Hearts."

Our first show took place in December 2002. Arkhipov was a major organizer. He invited Irina Danilina, who became the first in the House of Violets to lead a group of growers (called the Moscow Growers). He also showed his hybrids at that first event, which was very important — after all, it is the new varieties that African violet lovers want to see.

Today, Russian and Ukrainian hybrids are very popular in America. But 15 years ago, American growers did not know anything about our violets. In spring 2004, I brought about 50 of our varieties to the AVSA Convention. Before the convention, Joyce Stork asked me to give a presentation on African violets in Russia. I called it "The Violet Boom in Russia." I talked about our clubs and shows and presented photos of more than 100 of our varieties.

When the photo of 'AE-Nebesnoe Kryzhevo' (Heavenly Lace), a hybrid by Arkhipov, appeared on the screen, all the participants breathed out in unison,

"Wow!" This largely determined the success of the auction the next day, where growers gave more than \$2,000 for leaf cuttings of Russian varieties.



This photo of 'AE-Nebesnoe Kryzhevo' (Heavenly Lace) delighted participants at the AVSA Convention in 2004.



Paul Sorano congratulates Eugeny Arkhipov with the best in show 'AE-Belye Nochi' (White Nights).

When Paul Sorano came to us in July 2004, he judged the show in the House of Violets and Arkhipov's 'AE-Belye Nochi' (White Nights) became the best in show. Paul noticed an unusual pink-and-white fantasy on a blue flower. This plant was the first Russian variety

registered with AVSA in 2005. We registered more than 100 Russian varieties that year, but Arkhipov was the first in the list because his last name begins with A. 'Belye Nochi' was the first in the list because at the time, there was no hybrid by Arkhipov that began with A. (The prefix AE was added by Arkhipov later.)



'AE-Belye Nochi' (White Nights) with an unusual pink-and-white fantasy on a blue flower.

At the AVSA 2013 show, Arkhipov's variety 'AE-Zhemchuzhnye Zvezdy' (Pearl Stars), grown by Catherine Thompson, was the best standard. But, perhaps the favorite variety by Arkhipov among American growers was 'AE-Amur Elite'. Very often at AVSA shows you can find several of these plants, and photos of this variety have been published several times in *African Violet Magazine*. It was Steve Turner who named Arkhipov "Master of Fantasy Hybridizing."



'AE-Amur Elite' is often exhibited at AVSA shows.



'AE-Gemini New'.

The accolades for Arkhipov continue to come. In June 2021, the Journal of the African Violet Society of Canada had a photo of 'AE-Egorka Molodets' (grown by Alla Kotova), a variety with a unique color and fantasy, on the cover.

Arkhipov continues his hybridizing work; every year he has new, unusual introductions. For many years, he has been inviting me to photograph his new varieties. Every such visit is a celebration of meeting violets I have never seen before. His hybrids have their own unique features: unusual coloring, unique fantasy, three- and even four-color petals.

Arkhipov, like other hybridizers, is actively working on creating new characteristics and improving existing ones, such as a new color or a certain kind of fantasy. We regularly send his hybrids to the U.S. Paul Sorano, Ralph and Olive Ma Robinson, and Steve and Donna Turner offer American growers many varieties by Arkhipov.

Arkhipov has a permanent place on one of the shelves in the House of Violets, where he displays his new introductions and best varieties. He also sells leaf cuttings rooted by the hybridizer himself. When Russian growers visit the House of Violets, they can't pass by these unusual violets that are worth adding to any collection.



Family Portrait: *Columnnea purpusii*

By Paul Kroll

5953 Broadway, No. 128 • Lancaster, NY 14086
Email: pfkroll@me.com

Several years ago at a Gesneriad Society convention, a plant was exhibited in the class for trained and sculptured gesneriads. To be eligible for entry in this class, the plant has to have been trained or sculptured, as the class title implies, as opposed to exhibiting a plant that has grown into something unusual in shape or form on its own. *Columnnea pupusii* was entered by Ben Paternoster and was absolutely beautiful. It had been trained as a bonsai and looked like a small tree.

For those of you who follow this column, you recall that I enjoy entering container gardens in AVSA shows. These container gardens are called “plantings of gesneriad material” in Gesneriad Society shows. Here are the class titles for the different societies:

AVSA

Dish Garden
Terrarium
Natural Garden
Bottle Garden

Gesneriad Society

Tray Landscape
Terrarium
Natural Garden
(no class)

In the Gesneriad Society container garden classes, gesneriad material must predominate, with other compatible plants limited to ground covers. This presents a problem in that it is difficult to find upright plants to use as a “tree.” Often, plants that are tall enough have leaves that are too large and out of proportion for the small plantings. The gesneriad family is so vast that there are many choices of plants of differing heights and textures to use for the remainder of the plants in your container garden.

When I saw the *Columnnea purpusii* trained into a tree form, I had an “aha” moment. I asked Ben about the plant, and he offered me cuttings. Once I received them, I began my journey into the bonsai technique necessary to duplicate his efforts.

When I saw the
Columnnea purpusii
trained into a tree form,
I had an “aha” moment.

I put the cuttings into my propagation mix, and when they were rooted, I separated them into individual Solo cups, cutting off the lower leaves to encourage each plant to grow taller. It worked! Each stem grew thicker as the plant grew taller. I continued to cut off the lower leaves, but I did allow branching near the top. Eventually, after about a year’s time, my plant began to look like the small tree I desired.



I continue to prune out the largest growing leaves and thicker growth. The accompanying photographs were taken just after I performed the latest surgery on my bonsai. Above, you can see the small cuttings (upper left), which I will root and pass along, as well as the “trash” I have cut out (lower right) and will

discard. The pruned plant is in the center of the photo with its root ball showing.

This photo at right is of the trimmed plant itself. It shows the plant repotted and ready to continue its growth. I have purposely kept the root ball trimmed to fit into a 2 1/2-inch pot. I don't want the root ball to get too large to use in a small container garden planting.

This same technique could be used on several other *Columnea* plants. Be careful to choose one that has small leaves to keep things in proper proportion. I have not bloomed this plant. Perhaps it is reluctant to do so due to my constant pruning. It does bloom with red blossoms. A photo of it and other *Columnea* species and hybrids can be viewed on the Gesneriad Society's Gesneriad Reference Web, located on the organization's website.



Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

Just go to smile.amazon.com and follow the directions.

Select African Violet Society of America as your organization to support.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

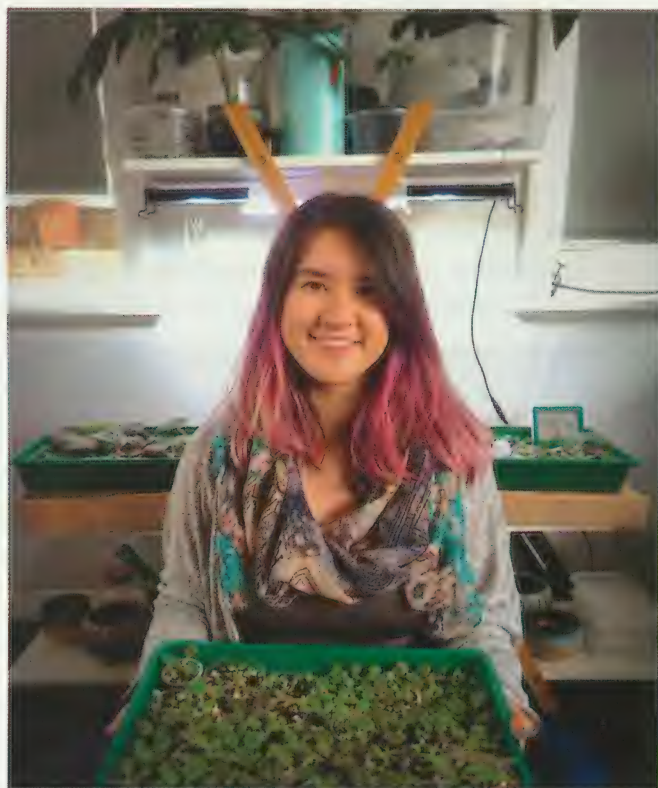
What's in an African Violet Seed? Here's a Closer Look

By Joanna Gaelic Miramar, Wellington, New Zealand

Email: joanna.gaelic@hotmail.com

I got bit by the African violet bug in 2018 but got serious about hybridizing them when I moved back home to New Zealand last year. I bought several leaves off another grower, but my impatience got the better of me, and before my leaf babies had even grown out, I asked around on our New Zealand African Violet Facebook group for spare seeds. Another New Zealand hybridizer said they had some excess to share, so I immediately bought them.

I just happen to have a handheld microscope (20x-60x zoom) as I raise monarch butterflies and need a way to check them for parasites. So, I thought, well, if I've got it, why not use it! I decided to do a little experiment: germinating African violet seeds on damp paper towels in a sealed container so I could capture the process of the tiny seedlings breaking out with my microscope. And what a fascinating process it is.

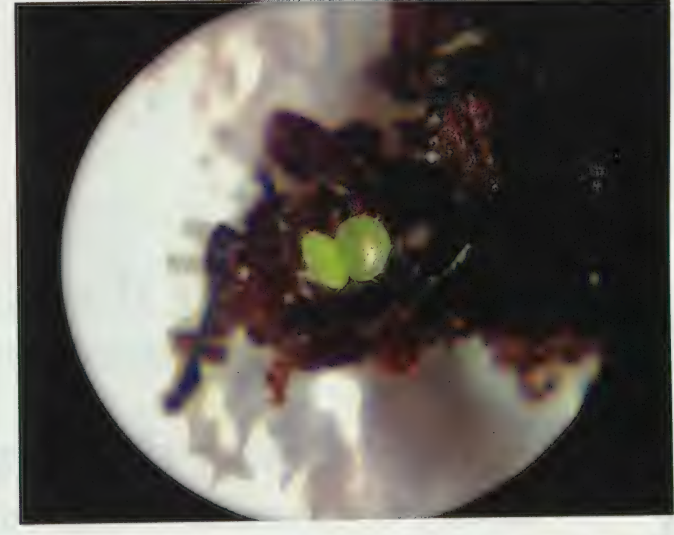
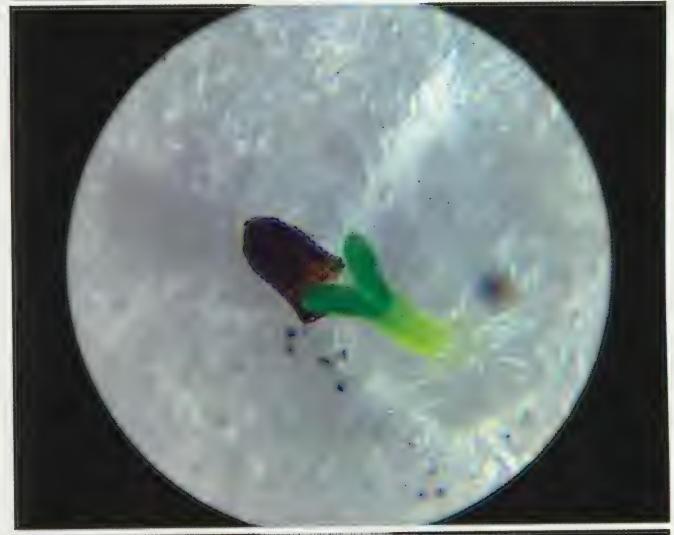
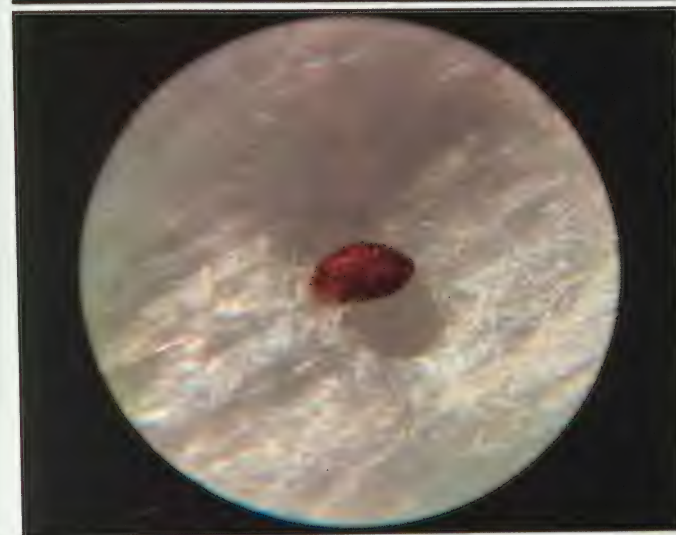
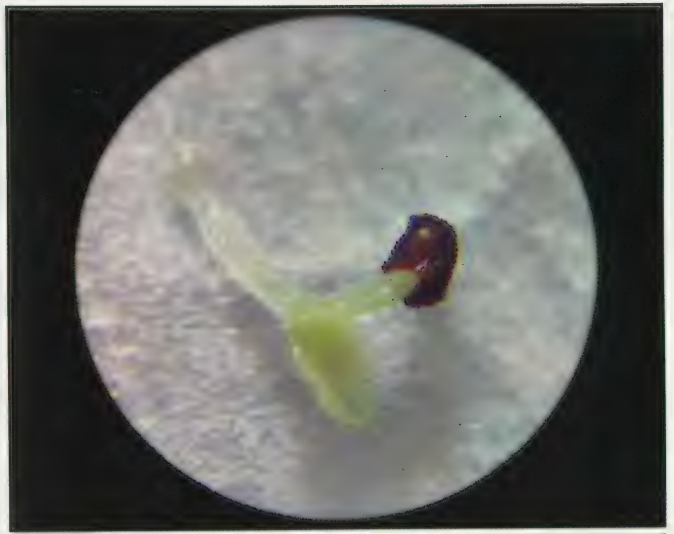
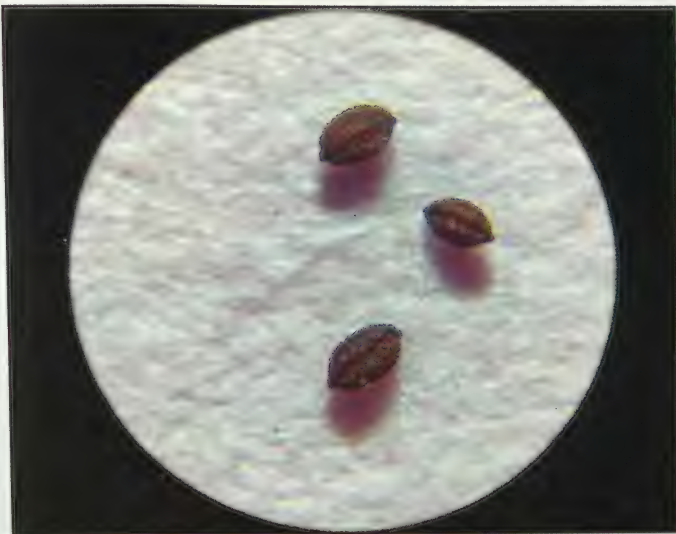


I've read articles on vegetable and other seeds that say this method of germinating on paper towels can be three times faster.

There were some real benefits to germinating seeds with this method. It's a great way to keep track of the seeds so none "disappear" into the soil. This provides a better idea of the ratio of viable seeds in a pod. A paper towel is pathogen free, and it's easy to control the amount of moisture on it. Using a paper towel also uses less space than lining up pots or containers.

On the other hand, growing seeds this way takes a little more time because it adds the extra step of moving the tiny seedlings into pots. I used a wetted skewer (a toothpick would work too), as the seed coat will stick easily to it, to gently move each sprouting seed into potting mix. Ideally, you want to move it before the primary root gets too long and embeds itself in the paper towel. However, if the seedlings grow out on the paper towel, just cut out and place the paper towel in the potting mix along with the seedlings. The paper will break down before long.

Based upon my observations, it takes roughly a week for the seedlings to fully break free of the seed coat. Like most other seeds, they have their primary root come through and secure themselves before the stem and cotyledons follow. I also noticed that a



round hole seems to form in the side of the seed coat prior to the primary root breaking out, perhaps to let light onto the cotyledons.

I've read articles on vegetable and other seeds that say this method of germinating on paper towels can be three times faster. So far, it's taken mine about two weeks to fully germinate, which is pretty standard for

African violets. However, I started this experiment in the middle of winter, so I'd like to do it again in the summer and see if germination happens faster.

I encourage all to try this method at home, whether you have a microscope or not. It was so fun to watch these tiny specks come to life, especially since I know they will grow into beautiful violets over time.

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$1,438

Booster Donations support AVSA's ongoing general expenses.

■ **\$500-\$599**

Western Colorado AVS

■ **\$100-\$199**

Austin Grevious, University Place, WA

■ **\$50-\$99**

Central Arkansas AVS

James Coombs, Madisonville, KY

Donna Mosher, Grove City, OH

John Novak, St. Michaels, MD

Joan Wilson, Theresa, WI

■ **\$25-\$49**

Ann Athey, Denton, TX

Randy McMahon, Ankeny, IA

■ **Under \$25**

Ceil Carey, Plano, IL

Adrienne Clagett, Nashville, TN

George Lousias, Valentine, NE

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Janice Murray, New York, NY

Stephen Navadel, Ramona, CA

Stan Rough, Temple, PA

Betty Tillman, Fort Worth, TX

Barbara Burde Endowment Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$4

The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

■ **Under \$25**

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund

By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$139

The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ **\$50-\$99**

AVS of Philadelphia

*In appreciation for the programs presented by
Beverley Williams and Kurt Jablonski*

Lorraine Leslie

AVC of Morris County

In lieu of speaker's fee for Dale Martens

■ **\$25-\$49**

First AVS of Wichita Falls

In memory of Terri Post's brother-in-law

■ **Under \$25**

Sue Hanna

Patricia Miklica

Boyce Edens Research Fund

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Donations received from May 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021 Total: \$179

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

■ **\$100-\$199**

Seattle AVS Inc.

*In lieu of speaker's fee for Ronn Nadeau and
Glenda Williams*

■ **\$50-\$99**

Austin Grevious, University Place, WA

■ **\$25-\$49**

Carolee Carter, Ocala, FL

In memory of Sharon Gartner

■ **Under \$25**

Patricia Miklica, San Jose, CA

African Violet Society of America, Inc.

Combined Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2020

Assets:

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$ 20,193.14
Investments	44,379.53
Inventories	5,769.38
Prepaid Expenses	6,400.00
Restricted Assets:	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	32,529.79
Investments	611,189.43
Capital Assets:	
Other Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	<u>16,497.06</u>

TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$736,958.33</u>
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Liabilities:

Accrued Payroll Taxes Payable	\$ 212.31
Sales Taxes Payable	28.41
Deferred Revenue	<u>113,444.70</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>113,685.42</u>
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Net Assets:

Net Assets With Donor Restrictions	412,526.51
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions-Designated	154,867.89
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	<u>55,878.51</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS:	<u>623,272.91</u>

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	<u>\$736,958.33</u>
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Becoming an AVSA Judge

By Mary Corondan Email: judges@avsa.org

Have you ever considered becoming an AVSA Judge? You will find it a fun and rewarding experience, one that allows you to travel to shows, renew old friendships and make new ones, and see many new varieties.

The qualifications of an AVSA Judge are to have good judgement and be knowledgeable, experienced, courageous, tactful and kind. An exhibitor is proud of each of their entries, and a judge should always look for beauty rather than flaws.

The hierarchy of judges begins with the Student Judge. After three years of serving as a Student Judge, the level of Advanced Judge can be achieved. It takes a minimum of nine additional years to become a Senior Judge. Following at least 15 additional years, a Senior Judge may reach Master Judge status. Each of these levels has a separate list of qualifications that must be met to proceed to the next level.

For this article, I will discuss the Student Judge level. The first step to becoming an AVSA Judge is to be an AVSA member and study the "Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges." The Handbook is available in the Store on the AVSA website as a downloadable and printable PDF. You can also request a mailed

hard copy. The applicant must grow at least 25 African violets, 15 of which must be registered varieties. In addition, the candidate must have earned three blue ribbons in an AVSA-sponsored show. One of these blue ribbons may have been earned in design or in the "other gesneriad" section of an AVSA show.

A Student Judge is a beginning judge and is entering an apprenticeship program. To become a student judge, students must pass a judging school exam with a grade of 75 or higher. It includes point scoring two African violets.

A list of judging schools is available on the website under Events. A prospective Student Judge should register for an AVSA-sponsored judging school and present proof of having earned three blue ribbons to the teacher. If a school is not being offered in your area, plan to attend the one at the AVSA Convention in 2022.

The more educated you are, the more you can appreciate the wonderful world of African violets. Please consider becoming a judge this year or next.

Minutes of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. Annual Meeting

June 5, 2021 Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention

The Annual Business Meeting of the African Violet Society of America, Inc. was called to order by Third Vice President Glenda Williams at 3:06 p.m. CDT via Zoom video conference. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Glenda Williams, and the invocation was given by Linda Hall. Glenda Williams introduced herself as Third Vice President and presented the President, Sue Ramser.

Mary Corondan, Acting Secretary, reported a quorum was present. She also read the Standing Rules for the Annual Meeting, and they were adopted.

President Ramser appointed Randy Deutsch, Joyce Stork and Linda Price to approve the 2021 Annual Meeting minutes. Sandra Skalski was appointed Timekeeper. Candace Baldwin, Doug Allen and Jill Jensen were appointed Tellers. Jeri Anderson reported the minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting were approved.

Jill Jensen, Resolutions Chair, presented the Courtesy Resolution, which was published on the AVSA website under the Cyber Convention. There was one correction in the fourth line, which should be changed from 1946 to 1947. The Resolution was adopted.

The Bylaws Amendments for Article IV, Officers and Their Duties, Sections 1 and 2; Article V, Section 1; and Article X, Sections 1 and 2, were considered as published in the May/June 2021 issue of the *African Violet Magazine*. They were presented by Mary Lou Harden, Chair of the Bylaws Committee. The amendments were adopted as printed.

Linda Hall, Nominating Committee Chair, submitted the following nominees to serve as Directors: Scott Ammann from Illinois, Kurt Jablonski from Florida, Patricia Mattson from Wisconsin, Leonard Re from California and Danny Tidwell from Arkansas. The

following officer candidates were presented by Linda Hall: Susan Anderson, President; Mary Corondan, First Vice President; Glenda Williams, Second Vice President; Sharon Shannon, Third Vice President; and Terri Post, Treasurer. There was no candidate for the office of Secretary since the committee was unable to find a qualified candidate. Both the directors and the officers were elected via a Zoom poll. President Ramser announced these directors and officers will be installed at the Society Awards and Installation Event in the evening.

President Ramser recognized the retiring directors: Randy Deutsch, David Kesler, Neil Lipson, Linda Price and Sharon Shannon. Also recognized as retiring were the following Committee Chairs: Carolee Carter, Publications; Linda Hall, Nominating; Sue Hoffmann, Resolutions; and Pat Sutton, Courtesy. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Sharon Gartner, Convention Show Awards Chair, who recently passed.

Retiring Editor Teresa Odle was recognized by President Ramser. President Ramser thanked her for her years serving as editor. Teresa stated that her grandson was just born, and she will miss seeing everyone. A round of applause was offered for all retirees.

President Ramser welcomed incoming Editor, Sophia Bennett, to the AVSA family. Sophia said she is thrilled to be joining the society and is excited about becoming a part of us. She is a freelance writer as well as a communications consultant. She is excited to bring her skills to AVSA. Everyone is encouraged to contact Sophia at any time with their thoughts. Sophia became a member of the AVSA family on May 17.

Danny Tidwell, Little Rock Convention Chair, extended an invitation to attend the 2022 AVSA Annual Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Jill Jensen presented the Lest We Forget list, which recognizes those who have passed this year. The names added were Johnny Williams from Texas, Mary McFarland from Texas, Edward Bradford from New York and Billy Deville from Arkansas. A moment of silence was observed in memory of the AVSA members lost this past year.

Several announcements were made. President Ramser stated there will be a ten-minute break after this meeting before we begin the Open Forum. She also said those who registered for the Highlights package

would have access to the Cyber Convention site through June 13 and those who have the full registration would have access through July 6. Following this meeting, Board members are asked to log out of this meeting and log in to the Called Board Meeting. The quorum for the called Board meeting is 15 members. Mary Corondan reminded Board members that a separate link for the Called Board meeting was emailed to them.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:47 p.m. CDT.

Violets Most Wanted List

By Mary Thompson, Chair, Violet Preservation Committee

Email: preservingviolets@avsa.org

If you have one of these violets, please email the Violet Preservation Committee with your contact information so we can pass it on the person looking for that violet.

Alamo Red

Alamo Haven

Helen Van Pelt Wilson

Teen Craze

Teen Dream

The original 10, but not Neptune or Blue Girl

2021 Convention Judges Breakfast Notes

By Paul Kroll Lancaster, New York

Email: pfkroll@me.com

The Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention is now behind us. While not quite the same as being there in person, the committee responsible for all the work involved in transforming the convention, presentations, show and activities to a virtual format is to be congratulated!

The Judges Breakfast was held on June 5. There were quite a few in attendance, although not as many as usual. I am certain that has to do with folks not having access to the online meeting.

Shows and Judges Chair Mary Corondan opened the meeting by having the committee members introduce themselves and state their duty assignment. There was only one judging school taught in 2020. Due to the lack of shows, there was not much activity to report on. Five shows actually happened in 2020 when we usually have 70! Things are beginning to open up now.

There will be four new master judges as of October 2021. Their names are in the Shows and Judges column on page 36.

Judging credentials for all judges will not expire until further notice. When schools are able to be scheduled along with shows to gather ribbons, an announcement will be made in the Shows and Judges column of *AVM* regarding the reinstatement of expiration dates for those judges' cards.

Susan Anderson is the show schedule approver. She listed all the changes that have happened recently regarding all the processes involved with shows. All payments, awards packets and rosette orders, schedule submissions, Tally Time and The Winners Are reports, and other materials may be done electronically now. This eliminates mailing costs and the inevitable slow process when having to do things via

snail mail. These things should now be accessed on the AVSA website in the Shows and Judges area.

In the horticulture division, judges are admonished to "look for beauty, not flaws." This should apply also in the design division.

Here are the questions submitted.

A new exhibitor entered a plant that was in a cache pot (mildly decorative, ceramic, with a hole drilled in the bottom). Classification had counseled her to put it into the class for decorative/unusual containers. The judges eliminated it from consideration. The schedule is the law of the show, and it may have stated that green pots only were allowed. All things considered, after discussion, it was decided that the plant could have been entered into the regular color class.

A teacher stated that a question on his exams most often missed by the students was what to do with a trailer having only two crowns. They often answered incorrectly that the plant should be eliminated from consideration for an award. The correct answer is that 11 points are to be deducted and to proceed with judging.

A senior judge reported that he observed all too often that judges seem to think that the category of interpretation in design is the most important when

scoring. This is wrong. The category of design is worth 40 points, and interpretation is only worth 15 points. Even if the judges feel that the interpretation category was missed entirely, the design itself might still receive enough points to be awarded a red ribbon!

An exhibitor new to design asked whether blooms and/or foliage used might be painted and/or sprinkled with glitter. The answer is yes.

A master judge stated that in the horticulture division, judges are admonished to “look for beauty, not flaws.” She wondered if this could be stressed to apply also in the design division. It seems that judges immediately begin by challenging anything out of the ordinary by asking, “Is this allowed?” rather than welcoming fresh, new ideas. Obviously, originality is encouraged. Judges should act accordingly, embracing creativity.

Another master judge posed the idea of continuing education for our judges. A good number of our master judges are able to judge only at conventions and perhaps do not keep up with current practices. Some have been reported to have made up their own rules! If there were some type of continuing education put into place, perhaps it would be advantageous to all judges. Many fields require continuing education for continued certification. We need consistency throughout our shows.

Seminars might make this available to all. Our judging council programs cover some of these areas, but

perhaps something will be made available for those who have no council or programs to attend. The Shows and Judges Committee will be looking into the possibilities. Recommendations will be made to the Executive Council to see how this might be implemented.

Mary Corondan stated that although the pandemic had a great deal of negative effects on our shows and schools, some good things have come as a result of restrictions. Many members have become more technology savvy and proficient in apps such as Zoom. Many local, state, regional and AVSA meetings have been held via Zoom, which has led to greater participation in some cases. Local programs by experts across the country have been presented via Zoom. These have brought the membership closer together in a time of isolation.

A question was asked by a judging school teacher whether it might be possible to have AVSA judging schools available in a Zoom format. While this may be possible, it is not possible for the required judging of plants as a part of the exam. The integrity of the exam writing could also come into question.

A new, revised “AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges” is in the works. It is planned to have the completed draft ready for perusal by October of this year. When approved, it will go to print. AVSA hopes to have it available for sale at the 2022 convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.

AVSA Website and Records Reminder

Have you created a new password on the new AVSA website that launched in January? Are you having trouble logging into your account? Please contact Amy Carruth, AVSA Office Manager, at 409-839-4725 for assistance.

Does AVSA have your email address so renewal notices and reminders can be sent to you via email? If not, please send your current email address to office@avsa.org. Thank you for your help in keeping our records up to date.



Photo Credit: Galina Lazarenko

LiK-Portret na Pamiat

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: G. Lazarenko
Standard



Photo Credit: Natalia Skorniakova

RM-Gulizara

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: N. Skorniakova
Standard



Photo Credit: Svetlana Repkina

RS-Granatovyi Blesk

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: S. Repkina
Standard



Shows and Judges Column

By Mary Corondan, Chair

Email: judges@avsa.org

It was wonderful getting together with everyone during the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention. Seeing familiar faces again was so refreshing!

The Judges Breakfast went extremely well. Everyone was able to get their questions answered, and it was so much easier to hear everyone via Zoom rather than in a meeting held in a large banquet hall. For specifics on the question-and-answer session at the breakfast, please refer to the article written by Paul Kroll on page 32.

Last year was a challenge for shows due to pandemic restrictions. In 2020, there were only five shows. In 2021, we have already had four shows to date, and most councils that have fall shows are planning to proceed with them. This is great news for the violet world.

A total of 16 students took the Senior Judge's exam in 2020. The first Senior Judge's exam was taken by three students, five took their second exam and four took their third exam. Four judges will earn their Master Judge's certificate in October 2021. Congratulations to Carolee Carter (Florida), Betsy Fox (Wisconsin), Gail Podany (Minnesota) and Barbara Werness (Minnesota) for achieving the status of Master Judge.

This is a reminder that there is now a form available online to submit schedules for approval. The forms contained in the show packet are online as well. The "And The Winners Are ..." form and Tally Time form can be submitted electronically in one easy fillable form. All of this information and more is available in the Shows and Judges section of the AVSA website.

The Shows and Judges Committee is considering ideas to help Master Judges stay current with judging practices through continuing education. More will follow on this as it develops.

The updated version of the "AVSA Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges" is still under revision. One feature will be updated illustrations of blossom and leaf types, which are being contributed by Dianne Duggan. We are very appreciative to Dianne for sharing her talent with AVSA. The goal is to have the proof of the Handbook ready for Shows and Judges Committee and Executive Committee approval in October, and to have the completed edition available for sale at the 2022 AVSA Convention in Little Rock. A downloadable version will also be produced.

Several members have mentioned the possibility of a videoconference (Zoom) judging school. The lecture portion of a judging school could easily be done this way. The difficult parts would be the judging of plants and maintaining the integrity of the test. An affiliate may want to consider doing the lecture portion of the judging school via Zoom, and then doing the judging aspect and written exam in person. This would lessen the time spent in the classroom.

At the current time, all judging certificates have been extended indefinitely. When affiliates throughout the country begin to host shows again, the extended expiration dates of current judging certificates will be announced in this column. As previously stated, Senior Judges should continue to take their exams on schedule.

Continue pampering those violets. Shows are on the horizon!

The Old-Fashioned Windowsill Violet Enthusiast

By Pat Lasusky Willingboro, New Jersey

I grew up in the 1960s in a house full of African violets. My mom, who was a caring and creative woman, was also a stay-at-home mom for the first 20 years of her marriage. Along with keeping an immaculate house, raising her children, cooking and all that goes along with being a homemaker, she pursued various interests.

One lasting interest was her African violets. Every morning, she would walk along the front windows, taking a spent blossom or a bad leaf off here and there. This continued to be her habit until she was physically unable to do it. Mom was the old-fashioned violet grower: terra-cotta pots, soaked and scrubbed in the kitchen sink; Dad being called upon to blow cigarette smoke onto the leaves to kill aphids. (Too bad Dad didn't realize that the cigarettes were as bad for him as for the aphids.)

As a child, I wasn't crazy about the African violets. I thought the hairy leaves were creepy. Plus, being clumsy, I was always knocking over the glass pill bottles (remember those?) full of water in which Mom propagated leaves. Still, I watched as she explained to me what she was doing and how to take care of the plants. For her, with no personal income at that time, it was a low-cost hobby to start, especially since she could trade plants with her friends. I don't believe my mother ever purchased a violet.

Fast-forward to 2010, when I inherited Mom's remaining violets and the house I grew up in. How could I not love the violets, flowering all year round on our northeast-facing, deep front windowsills? Those two 8-foot-wide, unobstructed windows are just magic for gesneriads of all kinds. The living room also has an east-facing window on the perpendicular wall, so gentle direct light strikes the violets in early

morning and the room is bright all day. When people ask me my secret, I tell them it's just a good house for violets.

Mom also switched
from bottom-watering
to top-watering at
some point.

I've switched to plastic pots, as my mother did in her later years, and I use a lot more perlite than she did. Mom also switched from bottom-watering to top-watering ("Water them until they wet out the bottom") at some point. "Water early in the day; you don't like to sleep in a wet bed and neither do they," she would tell me. I mostly top-water, though I have a few on wicks and some are easier to bottom-water because of the density of the plant. I like to see that my soil is porous by observing how the water sinks in.

Growing violets on the windowsill is a wonderful hobby, as simple or as complicated as you want it to be. And now I walk up and down my row of violets almost every day, enjoying their beauty and thinking of my mother.



In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Indiana Academy, Ball State University • Muncie, IN 47306

Email: JSmith4@bsu.edu

In June, I had the good fortune to be one of the presenters at the Cyber Diamond Celebration Convention. I also served as one of the Cocktail Hour speakers. Many of the questions in this column stem from either the presentation or from questions asked during the Zoom happy hour. Thanks to everyone who participated in the convention.

Q: You mentioned in your presentation that some African violets produce multiple flower stalks from each leaf axil. Any idea how this trait is inherited or how it can be selected for?

A: The trait for multiple flower stalks is not common and only occurs regularly in one of the species clones (*S. ionanthus* cl. *grandifolia* No. 237). In most instances where a trait is rarely seen or is not common, the trait is usually a genetic recessive. I have not tried to hybridize for this trait and cannot provide direct evidence that it is a genetic recessive, but I think that would be a good assumption if a hybridizer were trying to select for the trait.

The species clone No. 237 would make a good parent for starting a breeding program for multiple bloom stalks. It would make a good seed parent because the single flowers readily accept pollen and produce seed pods. It also has good symmetry, high bloom count and other desirable traits. The blue flower color would be dominant and the flowers are droppers. Both traits could be undesirable depending on the hybridizing goals. Choose a pollen plant of similar symmetry, high flower count and perhaps a recessive flower color such as pink or fuchsia red. I'd suggest using at least a semi-double flower in order to get good pollen.

The multiple bloom stalk trait will not be evident in the young F1 plants. You may have to grow several to mature size to see if they exhibit the ability to produce

multiple bloom stalks. If any of the F1 offspring do have the trait, try selfing the plant or crossing two good F1 plants together to get an F2 generation. This should help reinforce the multiple bloom stalk trait and bring out any recessive flower colors.

Another idea would be to make the cross on the clone No. 237 using several different pollen parents. This should produce a wider range of F1 offspring to choose from to produce the next generation. Be prepared to trash many of the resulting F2 offspring, but hopefully you'll get some plants with the ability to produce multiple bloom stalks.

Q: Can a hybridizer select for higher flower count on bloom stalks?

A: Yes, the flower count on a bloom stalk does have a genetic component, and selection can be made for higher bloom counts or higher number. However, there is only so much energy available for producing flowers. It will be very difficult to increase the flower number on plants with very large flowers or those with high petal counts. It would take a significant increase in the total energy available to the plant to increase the number of flowers with those characteristics.

Using plants with smaller flowers or those with a single row of petals will be easier to work with when selecting for higher flower counts. The standard method of breeding plants with high bloom counts together and selecting for that trait in the offspring should work.

Q: Do you think hybridizers will ever be able to produce trailers with coral red flowers?

A: I don't see why trailers with coral red flowers shouldn't exist, but I can anticipate that it would be challenging to get all of the necessary factors together in a single plant.

I would start by crossing a good trailer with pink or fuchsia red flowers with a plant with good coral red flowers. You should choose your parents to also reflect the size of trailer you want to produce. Using standard plants in the original cross will likely result in standard trailers. Using semiminiature or miniature plants will produce smaller trailers. It shouldn't make a difference which parent is the seed parent and which is the pollen parent in order to get trailers or coral red flowers. However, if you are after variegated foliage, be sure to use the variegated plant as the seed parent.

Because coral is a genetic recessive, the F1 plants are likely to all be non-coral colors. The amount of trailing produced in the F1 generation will depend on the genetic background of the trailing parent. However, I would anticipate that there will be little trailing in these plants. Select any offspring that show a hint of trailing habit. You will need to also look for offspring that have pink or fuchsia red flowers. Try to also find plants with a strong flowering habit or other desirable traits. If you grow out a large number of the F1 offspring, you'll have many more choices to pick from.

Cross your best F1 offspring together. At least one parent must have fuchsia red flowers in order to get coral red flowers in the next generation. Your odds of getting the coral factor in the F2 generation will be approximately 25%. If both F1 parents are fuchsia, you increase the probability of getting coral red flowers.

The inheritance of trailing will be complex and depend on the starting trailer parent. If you treat trailing like a recessive, you may have about 25% trailers in the F2 generation. The odds of getting coral red flowers on a trailer would be approximately the product of the chances of the two traits multiplied together, say perhaps a one in 16 chance. The odds are likely to be even lower depending on the exact mechanism of inheriting the trailing growth form. Be prepared to grow out a very large number of the F2 seedlings to increase the odds of getting the exact combination of traits you want.

If you carry pink flower color along with the other traits, this plan should also produce a few trailing

plants with coral flower color in the F2 generation. If you want star-shaped flowers, try to choose parents that have star-shaped blooms. That trait should then breed true through the F1 and F2 generations. If only one of the original parents has star blooms, the combination of trailing, coral red and star shape will drop to about a one in 64 chance. Possible, but rare in your F2 generation.

Q: The number of new introductions that were shown at the Cyber Convention was incredible. Is there a reason that there were so many new hybrids this year?

A: I, too, was very impressed with the number of new hybrids, both in African violets and African Primroses. There were also a good number of new sinningia hybrids as well. In my opinion, the reason is that there are a much larger number of people hybridizing right now than has been true for a number of years, especially the hybridizers in Russia and Ukraine. Many of these individuals are fearless in trying to put different combinations of traits together. As a group, they are really pushing the possibilities forward, and the result is many new plants.

In looking at the traits, I didn't see many examples of what I would consider "new" genetic traits. What I saw was the combination of existing traits in different ways (combining stars with wide white edges such as those found in Optimara myLove with puff fantasy centers, streaked fantasy centers, coral-colored centers, coral color in puff fantasy centers, etc.). All of these traits have been available to hybridizers for several years, but they haven't been combined together. There were also a number of new hybrids with bell-shaped flowers. This flower shape has been available for many years, but few hybridizers have chosen to work with the trait. The hybridizer working with this trait has produced several new introductions and color combinations with the bell flower shape. It was wonderful to see so many imaginative combinations of existing traits!

Of course, sending in pictures of the new introductions for a cyber convention made participation very easy and probably contributed to the high number of submissions.

Welcome Sophia Bennett, New Editor of *African Violet Magazine*

By Joyce Stork Email: joycestork@avsa.org

Sophia Bennett, living in Eugene, Oregon, officially joined the AVSA family July 1 as the 7th editor in our 75-year history. She writes that she has always loved house plants. “I have a few African violets that were gifted to me by important people in my life — my dear grandmother and a wonderful neighbor, both of whom have now passed away. They sit in a sunny living room window along with an orchid, jade plant, aloe and an assortment of other plants.”

Sophia also loves writing and got her start as a freelance writer by penning articles for her local Master Gardener newsletter as a volunteer. Since AVSA does not pay for articles, she suggests that writing for the *African Violet Magazine* is a great way for people looking to start a writing career to build a portfolio to show potential clients. It is also a great way to give back to AVSA.

Like every editor, Sophia depends on others to provide most of the content for the magazine, especially the wonderful group of writers who have previously contributed. She hopes to add new contributors as well. “Even if someone doesn’t consider themselves a writer, if they have a good idea and good information to share, we can work together to create an article,” she says.

When asked what kinds of articles she especially hoped to receive, she provided this answer: “I strongly believe people read magazines because they want good information they can use to make their lives better, and beautiful pictures that they can enjoy. Given that, my inclination is to focus on articles that provide solid, science-based, practical information that the average African violet grower can use to get healthier, attractive plants. Stories with photos are also great, but please make sure your photos are high resolution (at least 300 dpi).”

Even if someone doesn’t consider themselves a writer, if they have a good idea and good information to share, Sophia will work with them to create an article.

Sophia brings a fresh point of view to her approach to stories. “Articles with an environmental bent always make me excited. I’m also interested in any tips that clubs have for recruiting and keeping new members, especially younger people or people who come from different backgrounds than the typical member, or rethinking meetings/events as we come out of the pandemic.” She is less inclined to use human interest or personal reflection articles unless there is a unique angle or story that delivers real value to readers.

Sophia also notes that she plans to write one or two articles for each issue of *AVM*. Because of that, she would appreciate input from those who have a good idea but feel reluctant to write an article themselves.

Would you like to write for *AVM* but don’t know what to write? Sophia would be interested in building a list of volunteer writers to do assignment work. “If you’re interested in writing for the magazine but

don't have a topic in mind, definitely let me know by emailing me at editor@avsa.org. If you can send samples of anything you've written in the past, that's very helpful. You might also give me some ideas for what you like to write about, and how you like to gather information. Are you an amazing book or online researcher? Or would you rather interview people?" Author guidelines that provide more tips on submitting stories can be found at africanviolet.societyofamerica.org/learn/magazine.

Photographers should remember that the magazine can use only high-resolution photos (at least 300 dpi). She also notes that photos should be "good quality — in focus, with good framing, and interesting."

Sophia describes the process of submitting articles this way: "If someone is interested in writing an article, they might send me their idea and/or a brief outline first. That will help me determine if it's a good

fit for the current issue of the magazine. They're also welcome to send a completed article and I'll use it if I can, but might save yourself some time by sending the idea first to make sure I can use it."

In most cases, submissions received by the issue deadline will be used in the same issue. "I try to be kind and constructive about feedback," Sophia says. "I know many people have terrible memories of red ink and overly critical comments from their time in school. If an article is solid, I try to lightly edit. If an article needs help, I'll typically take a shot at making improvements and then send it back to the writer for review and maybe some additional work." She does reserve the right not to use submissions that don't have enough information to be of real value to readers.

Welcome Sophia! AVSA looks forward to a beautiful future with you at the helm.



Photo credit: Marina Karpova

Streptocarpus
'MK-Rozovyi Desert'

Cyber Diamond Celebration
Hybridized by: M. Karpova

Underwater Design 101

By Linda Hall Ravenwood, Missouri

Email: llhall@grm.net

If any of you know me and my designing, you know that underwater designs are my all-time favorite! I started my design career in 1987 in Lawrence, Kansas, at a Missouri Valley African Violet Council show. My first attempt at underwater design came at the 1989 Kansas City AVSA Convention. The theme was "Royal Double Play." It was a total disaster! I used white blossoms, which became translucent very quickly, and part of the design floated by the time the judges got to it. Guess what award I got? A well-deserved white ribbon. I was devastated!

I decided right then and there that my next underwater design would be a blue ribbon. It happened at Missouri Valley African Violet Council show that fall. Not only was it a blue ribbon, but it was best in class. I have been in love with the challenge of underwater designing ever since.

To create your own award-winning underwater design, the first thing you want to do is read your schedule several times so you are sure of the size limitations of your container and what color backdrop to use (if any). If the schedule does not say that backdrops are not permitted, I like to put a colored niche that complements the design behind the bowl. The reason is that there is always a painted wall, wild printed wallpaper or something behind where the glass container is to be exhibited, which can distort or take away from the design.

Next, choose which glass container will best fit the design. Be very careful here. Try to use a bowl with at least one flat side. Round bowls distort and enlarge the design unless the design is smaller and completely centered. The design might look great when you put it in the bowl, but add water and it is a totally different story. I speak from experience! In a flat-sided bowl, what you see is what you get. Before

you use the container, make sure you thoroughly wash it inside and outside.



A selection of containers ideal for underwater designs.

Next, assemble all the mechanics you will need. Frogs (pin holders) of various sizes, a hot (not cold) glue gun, various size fishing weights, a ruler, scissors, miscellaneous shells, and green and white floral sticky tape should be in your designing box. I also use floral glue and Elmer's spray glue. Various size tweezers, including a pair of 10- to 12-inch tweezers, are a necessity in underwater design.



Several of the tools needed to create beautiful underwater designs.

Whatever you want to use for line material, please test it at home prior to final assembly of the design. This is to make sure the material does not bleed or become milky when left in water.



A beach-inspired design by Linda Hall.

I tell you from experience, use dark purple or red blossoms with thick stems. They will last longer before they become translucent. Their color stands out underwater, which makes them an excellent focal point. Double blossoms also last longer. I can't say enough times to test your line materials and blossoms underwater before you assemble your final design.

Now that you have your design plan, bowl, line materials, blossoms and mechanics assembled, let's begin! Select your frog or whatever mechanic you choose to attach your line material and blossoms to. Put your line material in your pin holder and then put the pin holder in your container (using your 12-inch tweezers) before using your hot glue gun to secure the line material. Make certain that your line material does not extend above the top of the bowl (actually, leave 1/2 to 3/4 inch of dead space above the line material). Also, be certain your line material does not touch the sides of the bowl.

I can't say this enough times: Test your line materials and blossoms underwater before you assemble your final design.

If all is good, I remove the pin holder from the bowl and apply the hot glue to the line material and pin holder to secure them (we don't want them to float!). I use a hot glue gun because it dries relatively clear. Cold glue becomes very white and is more difficult to conceal.

Next comes the blossom placement. Personally, I like to place my blossoms at the base of the design for my focal point. I use my hot glue to hold the blossom(s) in place. I have also had them "climbing up" the line material for the visual effect of drawing your eye through the design. When they climb, this is where I use my floral glue. Follow the directions on the can or tube and it works quite well.



An underwater design features gesneriads.

Cover your pin holder and mechanics with a shell, leaf or other decorative item. Make sure you cannot see any of your mechanics from the front of the design. This is also where you check for strings of glue that might be hanging around. Trust me, the judges will find them!

Now your design is ready to attach to the bottom of the bowl. I use either green or white floral sticky tape. I put a small amount on the bottom of the pin holder. I then take my long tweezers and lower the design into the bowl and push the pin holder down until it sticks to the bottom of the bowl.

There is another theory about anchoring your design that I have used on occasion with a larger bowl and shell. I construct my design in the shell, anchor it with fishing weights and then lower it into the bowl. No sticky tape is required since it is weighted. Again, you must make certain your mechanics are not visible. Depending on the theme of the design, you could cover your mechanics in the bottom of the

bowl with sand, glass marbles and aquarium gravel, for example.

Now you are ready to add water. First, place your bowl in its final resting place for judging (you do not want to move it after you have added water). I caution you here to use only distilled water. Bring a gallon jug with you. Tap water contains many chemicals and can cause the water to become cloudy or turn color. It will almost always add bubbles to the design. Judges are not allowed to deduct points for bubbles, but they can detract from your design. I like to hold my fingers in a corner of the bowl and slowly pour water over my fingers and dribble it down the inside of the bowl so the water does not disturb my design.

I have had some good designs and some disasters, and those disasters came when I did not try my design at home before I went to the show. I love creating underwater designs and I hope you will give them a try!

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Let's Go to the Library!

By Kurt Jablonski

Email: library@avsa.org

As the new Chairman of the Library Committee, I have some very large shoes to fill. Throughout AVSA's history, several extraordinary people have led this committee into the future with the help of their dedicated committee members. They have brought all of AVSA's members many quality resources over the years. I thank them for all they have done.

For those who do not know me, I live in Miami Beach, Florida. I have been growing violets for about 16 years. Like many of you, my start came from my grandmother, to whom I am most grateful. I cherish all the memories and people who have brought me to where I am today. I have attended seven national conventions and they are the highlight of my year because I get to be with violet friends and family.

The Library Committee has been around since the early days of AVSA and has always played a vital role in preserving our African violet legacy. In the beginning, its focus was documenting national conventions in slides and turning them into presentations that local clubs could rent so members could experience a national show even if they could not attend in person.

However, as the years progressed, technological advances opened many doors, and the Library Committee has kept on top of all the cutting-edge changes in order to create high-quality, exciting media. Digital cameras have given all of us a chance to experience plants, people and all the things we love as they truly appear in real life. Today, high-definition video is the trend. There is so much we can do to capitalize on this valuable tool. The committee has already filmed video interviews of top convention winners, hybridizers and a few convention presentations.

One area I would like to greatly improve upon is the Library section of the AVSA website. There are photos from recent conventions, but I would like to digitize all the old convention slide programs so that a new generation of growers might take a trip back in time and see how things have changed during our society's history. I would like the committee to produce more video presentations for members. I would also like the committee to be able to better film the presentations at the national convention so we can turn them into high-quality programs that local clubs can rent via downloadable links from the AVSA website.

Many more ideas come to mind, as I am very ambitious, but Rome wasn't built in a day, and I know I cannot do this alone. I will need the help of my committee, including any new people who would like to join, to get this good work done. In addition, I have several ideas for programs but would like input from the members. I want to know what they would like us to do.

The last two years have been extremely challenging because the pandemic has robbed most of us of so much, including our monthly violet meetings and local/regional shows. Thank goodness for virtual meetings and the virtual conventions, but there is nothing like experiencing these events in person. I am ready to be back with you all in person, and I promise to work hard and help create a well-rounded portfolio of programs and videos that appeal to every type of member in AVSA. Now it's time to get to work.

Judging Design for AVSA

By Paul Kroll Email: pfkroll@me.com

When speaking of design, most people — spectators and judges alike — tend to think in terms of “I like that one” or “I don’t like that one.” It is human nature to like or dislike anything, but we must remember that the AVSA Handbook does not use those terms anywhere within its covers!

How is it best to judge the Design section of AVSA shows? By utilizing the AVSA Scale of Points for each particular type of design: Container Gardens, Interpretive Flower arrangements and Interpretive Plant arrangements.

The Scale of Points for Container Gardens has the top category labeled “Landscape Plan” as opposed to the category “Design” used for the flower and plant arrangements. The elements and principles of design (discussed below) do not apply so strictly to Container Gardens as they do to the other arrangements. By this, I mean that different levels of the landscape enter into the consideration: hills, valleys, upper and lower levels of the “soil” surface.

I was once on a panel that judged a dish garden that was entirely flat, with no contours at all. The panel awarded this exhibit a third place, taking off the most points under the Design category. Much to our horror, we found out that the exhibit was done by Ethel Champion, who was a Master Judge. She comforted us and said, “You did the right thing. I tossed that dish garden together the night before entry, in a hurry, and it didn’t deserve any higher score.” Think about this example and remember it the next time you construct or judge a Container Garden.

If you do not have material tall enough to be your “tree(s),” make the hill on which you plant that material a bit higher. It is also possible to have the lowest portion/section of the landscape be well below the edge of the dish you choose. This is

another way of adding interest and varying levels to your landscape.

In the Interpretive Flower and Interpretive Plant sections of the show, the top category on the Scale of Points is for design. This is where the elements and principles of design are assessed as they apply to the design you create or are judging.

There are six elements of design. The elements of design are readily seen.

Color	Pattern
Form	Space
Line	Texture

There are six principles of design. The principles of design are felt rather than seen.

Balance	Contrast
Dominance	Rhythm
Proportion	Scale

Twelve categories share a total of 40 points in the overall Design category of the Scale of Points for the arrangements. Forty divided by 12 equals 3.33 points for each for those twelve categories. Judges must tally the category points, adding or deducting appropriately. Once a score has been reached, it is imperative that the written comments justify that score. If points have been deducted, indicate the reason behind the decision. Do not leave the exhibitor wondering. Sometimes it is more beneficial, as judges, to think in terms of the comments first and then deduct the points to reflect those comments. Either way, it is necessary to think in terms of balancing the scores and written comments.

One of the most prominent errors on the part of an exhibitor is not filling the niche to approximately seven-eighths of the height. We often see designs that are considerably short of filling the height

dimension. It is possible to raise the design in its niche by elevating the whole thing with something under the cloth or drape at the bottom of the exhibit.

Another thing to consider is that as measurements decrease and a smaller design is executed, the categories of scale and proportion become very important. A design that is too large for its small niche will be very out of proportion. A container that is too large will also detract from the overall proportion of the design.

One needs to be very careful of color as well. Anything white used in a design really jumps out. My wife always says, "White adds 10 pounds." This is a good quip to remember when choosing a white container or other object to use in your design.

Another consideration when thinking in terms of the smaller arrangements is the blossom size. Using a miniature or semiminature blossom will help the proportion and scale of your overall execution. Try different blossoms of differing size and see which appeals best to you.

This article is not meant to be a complete guide to design either as a judge or exhibitor, but rather a thought-provoking essay to encourage you to think about your designs, whether judging them or executing them. Remember: Growing is great, but designers have the most fun!

This article originally appeared in the June 2014 Ohio State African Violet Council newsletter.

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



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Compost and African Violets

By Sophia Bennett Email: editor@avsa.org

Compost is typically something you hear about in the context of farms and outdoor plants. But compost can be great for indoor plants, including African violets.

Randy Ritchie, CEO of Malibu Compost, has been a guest speaker at the San Diego County African Violet Society, where he's espoused the wisdom of using compost and compost tea for violets. "House plants are plants, and all plants generally need some version of macro- and micronutrients," he said. "In an organic fertilizing program, you're giving the plant the option to uptake something it needs in a much more simplistic and direct way, and in a way it's used to absorbing nutrients, rather than giving it a synthetic fertilizer."

In addition to providing plants with vital nutrients, compost can help with water retention and increased soil fertility. But because of its ability to hold water in the soil, it's important not to go overboard when using it with containerized plants, cautioned Erica Chernoh, commercial and community horticulture agent at the Oregon State University Extension Service in Lane County.

"Whether compost is good for house plants really varies depending on how much water those house plants need," she said. "For succulents or plants that need a lot of drainage, it doesn't work as well." Even when it's used with plants that need a lot of water, "the soil can get heavy, which means over time it will collapse and you can lose pore space, which can lead to anaerobic containers."

The fact that compost can contain both beneficial and harmful bacteria means it does require handling with some care. Here are some tips to help African violets get the most out of it.

Ritchie recommends using compost tea every 90 to 120 days. Make sure to use it within 24 hours of making it. After that, it begins to lose its efficacy.

Add compost as a plant food

With most house plants, Ritchie recommends adding compost as a top dressing a few times a year. When the plants are watered, the nutrients will run into the soil.

However, because many violets are wick watered and need to keep their leaves dry, Ritchie recommends using compost tea in the watering repository instead. As the name implies, compost tea is made by soaking compost in water so the nutrients can enter the liquid. Oxygen is a vital ingredient; if the aerobic beneficial bacteria in compost are deprived of oxygen, they will die. Bottled compost teas are often not effective for that reason, but it's relatively easy to make compost tea at home.

Malibu Compost sells a mesh bag filled with compost that's intended for use in tea. "Drop it into a 2- to 5-gallon bucket, let it soak overnight, give it a good squeeze and a good stir, and put it into a watering

can,” Ritchie said. If possible, use warm water, which will activate the biology in the bag.

It’s also possible to make your own bag by filling a small, porous bag or old nylon stocking with high-quality compost. “What nutrients you’re getting out of a compost tea varies because it depends on how the compost was made,” said Chernoh. Just as a poor-quality synthetic fertilizer won’t help plants grow strong, a compost that isn’t made well won’t provide the nutrient-dense food plants need. Make sure you buy compost from a reputable garden store or commercial composting facility.

Another possibility is to look for worm castings, which is compost that has been made with the help of worms. They are particularly rich in many elements. They may be available in high-quality garden stores, or anyone can make them at home using a worm bin.

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture recommends using an aeration device, such as an aquarium pump connected to air stones, to vigorously add oxygen. The tea can be brewed for up to three days to extract the maximum amount of nutrients.

Once the compost tea is ready, add it to the water repository and let the plant take it up. The plant can sit in the tea for as long as you would normally water the plant. Make sure to catch all of the tea in a container; it contains humic acid, which can stain floors and furniture.

Ritchie recommends using compost tea every 90 to 120 days. Make sure to use it within 24 hours of making it. After that, it begins to lose its efficacy.

Ritchie has spoken at a few gatherings of the San Diego North County AVS. President Barbara Conrad received a sample of compost and found it helped her plants. “It made a difference for me with setting African violet leaves,” she says. “They definitely produced babies faster. To my surprise, the babies appeared to actually be greener than previous cuttings.”

Use compost in potting soil

The other place where compost can be effective is in potting soil. “It creates a biologically-diverse soil,” said Ritchie.

Although it’s possible to use compost made at home for house plants, Ritchie has a few cautions. One is that the compost should be completely finished before it is used. Compost should be dark in color, crumbly and smell like fresh earth. It’s a good idea to let it rest for several months even after it looks finished to ensure nutrients have broken down and larger organisms like worms have left the pile.

The other is that a “cold” compost pile — one made by adding materials over time, rather than building a pile all at once and getting it up to a certain temperature — likely will not eliminate all weed seeds and pathogens.

That’s why Ritchie recommends using a high-quality commercial compost that has been hot composted and screened to a very fine particle size. “One of the reasons I’m confident about the compost we make is that it’s thermophilic — it goes through a process to cook out pathogens and larvae,” he said. “It’s alive biologically, but it’s not filled with bugs.”

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension at the University of Florida provides a formula for using compost in seedling mix: two parts compost, two parts peat moss and one part pre-wet vermiculite. For full-grown plants, try a mix that’s one-third compost, one-third topsoil and one-third sand, vermiculite or perlite. “You don’t want compost to be any more than about 40% of the mix,” said Chernoh.

Can you compost African violets?

People who have violets they no longer need should consider adding them to home compost piles or putting them in a curbside yard waste recycling — as long as the plants are healthy. “You don’t want to introduce anything that has a fungal disease, especially into a static compost pile where you don’t have any way to cook diseases out,” said Ritchie.

Plants with botrytis, pythium, powdery mildew or other fungal diseases should be placed in the trash. Healthy plants can be returned to nature and become part of a mix that will make the plants you keep healthy and vibrant.

Getting to Know Little Rock, Arkansas

By Danny Tidwell Email: dantwell@yahoo.com

The Central Arkansas African Violet Society will be hosting AVSA's 76th Annual Convention show and sale in the great state of Arkansas in our capital city of Little Rock. The festivities and violet family reunion will take place at the Little Rock Marriott on the banks of the beautiful Arkansas River. The dates are May 29 to June 5, 2022, so mark you calendar now.

The Little Rock Marriott is located in the heart of downtown Little Rock in the River Market District. There are numerous restaurants, pubs and shops within walking distance of the hotel (most within one to three blocks). If you want, just jump on the trolley to get there. Saturday will be jumping with activity at the farmers market just down the sidewalk, where you are sure to find some treasures.

Hot Springs, known as the Spa City, is located just about an hour from Little Rock. Hot Springs is known worldwide for its Victorian-style bathhouses, which were completed around 1888. Some of the bathhouses are still in operation today. The bathhouses have tapped into the natural hot springs that come from the ground at 143 degrees.

Hot Springs was also a popular hangout for some pretty famous gangsters in the 1930s, including Al Capone, Frank Costello, Bugs Moran and Lucky Luciano. You can learn more about them at the Gangster Museum of America on Bathhouse Row, which is also a great place to shop.

In North Little Rock, just across the river, is a place called the Old Mill, a re-creation of an 1880s water-powered gristmill. The landscaping and water features of the Old Mill are a sight to see. I bet you didn't know that some of the opening scenes from a little old movie called "Gone With the Wind" were filmed there.

There are so many things to do in and around Little Rock, including shopping and visiting museums, natural attractions and the city of Hot Springs.

The ESSE Purse Museum, located in downtown Little Rock, tells the evolution of the 20th-century American woman through the bags she carried and their contents. I am sure you will want to make a purchase at the museum shop, where you will find high-quality and highly unusual handbags and accessories.

The beautiful Arkansas River is just out the back door of the hotel, where you can also enjoy an amazing sculpture garden. It is a great place to take a little break and try to decide where you can add a new plant stand at home for the plants you purchase from the sales room or win through the silent auction or raffle.

There are so many more things to do in and around Little Rock. I will share more ideas in future issues of *African Violet Magazine*. We look forward to seeing each of you in Little Rock for the 2022 AVSA Convention as "Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas."





Photo Credit: Natalia Kozak

NK-NLO

Cyber Diamond Convention

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KZ-94-2I

Cyber Diamond Convention

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Two Impressive Students Receive Scholarships from AVSA

By Dr. Charles Ramser

This year, there are two impressive recipients of the Boyce Edens Research Fund African Violet Society of America college scholarship.

The first is Julia Renee Major, who has been focusing on biochemistry and botany at North Idaho College. She will transfer to the University of Idaho in the fall. After graduating with her bachelor's degree, she hopes to go to graduate school and eventually find a job in a lab researching poisonous plants. "(My passion) is phytochemistry (plant chemistry) and my dream job would be to do research in that field for a living. Ultimately, any job where I can combine my love for plants and chemistry/toxicology would be great," she said in her prepared statement.



Julia Renee Major.

The other recipient is Korina Marie Bodisch, who has been attending Buena Vista University in Iowa and serving as a student technical assistant in the school's information technology department. "After I graduate with a bachelor's degree in scientific illustration, I plan on going to graduate school at the University of Georgia, where my master's degree in scientific illustration will have a concentration in botany," she shared in her application. Bodisch's parents are both

enthusiastic African violet growers. They passed their interest down to their daughter, and African violets still serve as an integral tool to keeping the family feeling connected.

This year, AVSA awarded scholarships to Julia Renee Major in Idaho and Korina Marie Bodisch in Iowa. AVSA is very proud of all our scholarship winners.

AVSA's scholarship program is open to undergraduate and graduate students who are studying ornamental horticulture, floriculture, plant genetics, botany or an equivalent program in an accredited college or university. Applications are due by March 1 of each year. More information is available in the Learn section of the AVSA website.

AVSA is very proud of all our scholarship winners through the years, and these two ladies certainly carry on that tradition. My thanks to Janet Riemer and Bill Price, members of the Scholarship Committee, for their help in selecting these two future stars.

Hudson Award for Affiliate Leadership

By Linda Hall Email: llhall@grm.net

Is there someone in your local African violet club who takes on every duty asked of them and goes above and beyond? We want to honor a special club member with the Hudson Award for Affiliate Leadership. AVSA presents this award annually at the national convention to one very deserving person.

Please take the time to complete a nomination form found on the AVSA website at africanvioletsofamerica.org/hudson-memorial-award-nomination-form. If you have any questions or need assistance completing the form, please contact Linda Hall at llhall@grm.net or (816) 550-4061.



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Hybridizing African Violets

By Jere Trigg Email: JATrigg@msn.com

Editor's note: Hybridizing African violets can be an enjoyable and rewarding pastime — but for beginners, the process of crossing plants and growing seedlings can seem overwhelming. Jere Trigg wrote a great introductory piece on this topic for the African Violet Society of America website. We've adapted that article for print. For a longer, more detailed version of this article, please visit www.africanviolet.societyofamerica.org, click on Violets 101 then click on Read Articles. There are many great resources in this section, but to find this article, go to Propagation and click the button that says Hybridizing.

Step 1: Choose the Two Parent Plants You Want to Cross

The choice can be based simply on your two favorite plants and a desire to find out what kind of offspring they will produce, or you may have a goal of producing a specific flower color or shape. For example, you may want to create a large red-and-white bi-color single star-shaped flower. In the latter case, some basic knowledge of violet genetics is helpful. (See the article on the AVSA website for more details.)



Jere's Roll Tide, an African violet hybridized by Jere Trigg.

It will take about three to four weeks to determine if the cross "took" and that a seed pod is developing.

Step 2: Perform the Cross-Pollination

The pollen donor flower should be mature — slightly beginning to fade in color. Remove the pollen sack (anther) from the flower with your finger. Using a Selecto hobby knife (razor edge), cut about one-fourth of the pollen sack open to expose the pollen.

The flower from the other plant — from which the seed pod will form — should be a relatively young flower that has been open for about two to four days. Look for the stigma, which is the tip of the single narrow tube called the style in the center of the flower that usually points away from the pollen sacks. The stigma upon which the pollen will be placed will be sticky at this time, which enables the pollen to stick to it. Carefully apply the opened surface of the pollen sack from the donor flower (male component) to the tip of the stigma of the receiver flower (female component) so that the pollen adheres to it. Repeat this procedure for several flowers on one plant to enhance the chances of a successful cross.

Loosely tie a thread to the stems of the flowers that were crossed to ensure they are left on the plant for the pods to mature as other flowers fade and are

removed. It will take about three to four weeks to determine if the cross “took” and that a seed pod is developing. A developing seed pod can be observed as a swelling at the base of the flower after the petals have faded and dried up. The seed pod should be left on the violet until it has turned brown and the stem that supports it is completely dry.

It will require about three to five months from date of the cross-pollination to the time the seed pod is mature and can be removed from the plant. The seed inside the pod will be viable for several months, so it is best to err on the side of caution before removing the pod from the plant. Once the seed pod has dried, it can be stored in a resealable plastic bag for planting of seed during the next several weeks.

Step 3: Plant the Seed

The following supplies are needed before planting the seed:

1. Good-quality, fine-textured seed starter mix. It must be sterile, moisture retentive and have a very fine particle size because violet seeds are so small.
2. A container with drainage holes for the planting mix that can be covered with a transparent material such as plastic wrap to create humidity for seed germination. I recommend a clear plastic container with a lid that was used to package salad greens.

Burn about nine evenly-spaced holes in the bottom for drainage and in the lid to allow some air to circulate. Fill the container about three-quarters full with the potting mix. Add enough water to dampen the mix and allow excess to drain out of the bottom. Place the seed pod on a sheet of notebook paper which has been folded to form a crease. Using the Selecto knife, carefully cut the seed pod open and let the seed fall into the crease of the notebook paper.

Using the tip of a pencil, carefully distribute the seeds from the paper onto the surface of the potting mix, ideally about 1/8-inch apart. Make sure that any excess water has drained out. Place the lid on top of the container and put it in a window or one foot below artificial light. This is preferred because the heat promotes germination. Light stands are relatively expensive but have great advantages over natural light for growing violets. If you need to buy

one, I recommend looking at Indoor Garden Supply, which has a wide variety. (Get more recommendations such as this one in the full article on hybridizing at www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org.)



Jere's Star Burst, an African violet hybridized by Jere Trigg.

Every few days, open the lid to make sure that the seed bed is moist. Don't assume that it is moist just because moisture is present on the inside top of the lid. Use the baster to add water to saturate the seed bed if necessary. Remain patient during the germination process. The first seed should begin sprouting in about three weeks. They will continue sprouting for an additional three months.

About one month after germination begins, remove the lid — but be extra careful about checking to ensure that the seed bed is moist. About two weeks after sprouting, you can begin feeding the babies with one-half the recommended-strength concentration of liquid fertilizer. Using the baster, apply the fertilizer in drops around each plant, being careful not to drop directly on the leaves. I use the edge of a paper towel to absorb the solution if it falls directly on the plant.

Step 4: Transfer Plants to Individual Pots

About three months after the first baby has sprouted, they should be big enough for their own pots. Before you separate the babies, you will need enough pots, a good-quality African violet potting mix and some seed starter. I use 3-inch diameter clear plastic Solo drinking cups with three drainage holes burned in them. I recommend Pro-Mix BX potting mix.

Add the potting soil almost to the top of the container. Make a small indentation in the center of the soil and put some of the seed starter mix in the hole for the young plant to begin growing in.

To remove the small plants, use a small cocktail fork to pry the plants up. Once the clump of mix has been raised, carefully remove the plant by gently pulling one of the leaves up, which will remove the plant, roots and some of the mix attached to the roots. Place the plant in the small hole. Using the baster, add enough water to stabilize the soil around the roots. Then add enough water to saturate the rest of the soil in the pot. Repeat the procedure until all plants have been removed to their individual containers.

Step 5: Fertilize Regularly

The plants should be fertilized at the recommended rate of 1/4 teaspoon per gallon every other time you water. Every six weeks, use plain water to flush accumulated fertilizer salts down from the top of the soil. Discard the water that drains out.

Watering with a weak fertilizer should be done whenever the top of the soil begins to feel a little dry, usually every four to seven days. If the top is slightly damp, you can water from the bottom using a saucer. The needed water should be drawn up within 15 minutes. Never let the pot sit in a saucer of water longer than 30 minutes to avoid root damage.

After watering, place the pot on a surface that provides for an air gap for the drainage holes. This could be a plastic plant saucer with ridges to allow air to contact the opening of the drainage holes. I use a 2-foot by 4-foot plastic ceiling tile grid, which will keep the drainage holes exposed to air.

Step 6: Repot the Babies

When the diameter of the plant reaches almost three times that of the container, repot it into a 4 1/2 - inch container. Violets should be repotted every nine to 12 months or if you notice that new growth from the center has not occurred for a period of a couple months. Over time, soil bacteria break down the organic constituents present, causing an acidic condition in the soil that prevents proper uptake of nutrients to the plant. The other issue is that the soil will become more packed, which eliminates the air pockets that provide needed oxygen to the roots, causing them to stop growing.

If the plant has developed a “neck” between the soil surface and the bottom row of leaves, this can be corrected during repotting. The procedure requires

first removing any damaged, yellow or very old leaves from the bottom row. This is accomplished by bending the leaf to one side or the other, causing the stem to break flush with the main stalk. Using a dull knife, carefully scrape the thin brown surface of the neck all the way around. Then remove enough of the bottom layer of soil to enable you to bury the neck in new soil. Water the plant thoroughly from the top. New roots will emerge from the neck, which will eventually stabilize the plant and encourage new growth to appear at the crown.

Plants should start
blooming within six
to nine months after
germination.

When repotting to remove soil that is more than one year old, you should remove as much of the old soil as you can crumble away from the roots. Add enough soil to the bottom of the pot to bring the plant up to the desired height in the pot. Then use a spoon to add the rest of the fresh potting mix around the sides of the root ball and up to just below the first row of leaves. It is not necessary to move the plant to a bigger pot unless the diameter of the plant has become three times larger than the diameter of the pot it was in. There will be a wide range in plant diameter among the seedlings from a single cross — a couple of mine are actually miniatures (less than 5 inches across).

Step 7: Enjoy Blooming

Plants should start blooming within six to nine months after germination. Expect many to resemble their parents in some ways, but no two will be identical. A few will be spectacular and may look nothing like their parents. If a violet is not blooming but is otherwise healthy looking, it is not getting enough light. Artificial lights solve this problem. By using a timer, you can vary the length of exposure to get the right amount of time. Artificial lights also enable you to better see and enjoy the beauty of your new plants.

In Memory

Lucille Chester

Lucille Chester of Tampa, Florida, passed away July 2, 2021 at the age of 90. Born in Lenoir, North Carolina, she moved to Florida in 1970 and became a member of the Tampa AVS, where she served as its President and in other leadership roles. She was a charter member of the African Violet Council of Florida and a member of AVSA, Dixie AVS and the Gesneriad Society. Lucille was perhaps best known for her artistry in creating beautiful dish gardens and terrariums, for which she won numerous awards. She was a great example of kindness and encouragement, especially for new members. She will be missed.

Fay Wagman

Fay Wagman of Rochester, New York, passed away on June 28, 2021 at the age of 89 after a valiant battle with cancer. Those who knew Fay will no doubt remember her easy smile, quick wit, ribald sense of humor, crystalline laugh and unflappable good nature.

Fay's ebullient nature was all the more remarkable in view of the sorrows she knew. She outlived two beloved husbands and also lost a son to cancer while he was still a young man. Fay's second husband, Irwin, was well known to African violet enthusiasts; his stoic demeanor made him a perfect "straight man" to Fay's vivacious doyen.

Both Fay and Irwin served AVSA in many capacities through the years, and Fay was a popular commercial vendor at AVSA conventions for more than a decade. I met her at the Washington, D.C., event in 2002. Fay had her vendor's booth full of miniature and semiminature African violets, which I had never seen before. I was captivated, both by these dainty marvels and the silver-haired fairy godmother who

took so much pride in sharing them with her customers. I had a million questions, and Fay responded with her customary magnanimity and infinite patience. Before long, she asked me to sit with her behind the display table. I was hooked, and a lifelong friendship formed. I joined AVSA that day as a Life Member, and for many years thereafter, Fay was a constant and loving presence in my life.

Fay was one of a kind — the best kind. She bloomed among us as brightly as the African violets she loved, and she will be dearly missed. — *Written by Rich Follett*

Roger Wheeler

After a series of debilitating illnesses and a short association with hospice, Roger Wheeler passed away on July 18, 2021. He was a lover of African violets and a long-time member of the African Violet Society of America. He served as President of the Naugatonic AVS, Thimble Island AVS and Nutmeg State AVS. He was a member of several other violet-related organizations and an avid needlepoint enthusiast. Roger never married but had an extensive secondary family between his Greek and Violet families. He was a good friend and will be greatly missed.



Photo Credit: Pavel Enikeev

***Streptocarpus* 'DS-Neon'**

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: P. Enikeev



Photo Credit: Stephen Covolo

***Streptocarpus*
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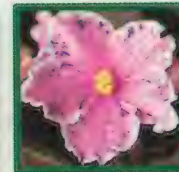
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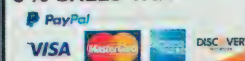
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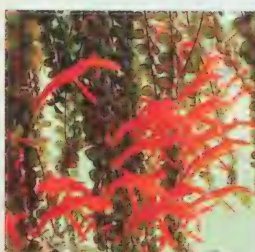
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African Violet MAGAZINE

Volume 74 Number 6

ON THIS COVER:

Rob's Vanilla Trail
Hybridized by: R. Robinson
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Every attempt is made to keep articles technically correct. Since the growing of fine African violets can be achieved in many ways, the methods and opinions expressed by writers are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of AVSA.



President's Message

By Susan Anderson Phoenix, Arizona

Email: president@avsa.org

Season's greetings! The holiday season is always a busy time of year. The Executive Committee has been meeting virtually on a regular basis to maintain communication, monitor activities and make timely business decisions for the Society.

COVID-19 and Conventions

Over the past two years, the pandemic seriously impacted our national AVSA conventions, resulting in unplanned venue, contract and schedule changes. Although meeting in-person was not an option in 2020 or 2021, AVSA was fortunate to have willing volunteers, technology skills and resources available to provide virtual conventions for our members. For now, with cautious optimism, AVSA is planning an in-person convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 2022. We will abide by CDC, state and venue guidelines and protocols and always put our members' safety first. We are committed to offering enjoyable and safe events.

Meanwhile, the Executive Committee was deeply saddened and disappointed to receive notification from the African Violet Club of Greater Atlanta, withdrawing their offer to host the 2023 convention in Atlanta. This was the 2021 event that was forced to reschedule to 2023 due to COVID-19. The EC officially accepted their decision and offers sincere gratitude for all their groundwork and contributions to the originally scheduled in-person convention. Their efforts were instrumental in the successful transition to a virtual 75th anniversary event.

A year ago, AVSA renegotiated an amended contract with the Atlanta hotel which cannot be canceled without serious financial impact. Thus, AVSA is committed to holding an Atlanta event in 2023 and is seeking a new host affiliate, as well as new Convention and Show Chairs to lead the event. Please see page 20 for more information.

Season of Sharing

To prepare for the holidays, shop early by selecting some terrific products from the AVSA Store, plants or supplies from AVSA's many Commercial Members, or unique gifts available from our corporate partners. There are plenty of options available. Books and educational media are always favorites. For anyone hard to buy for, the 2022 AVSA Calendar may be just the thing. Otherwise, consider gifting an AVSA membership and introduce a new member to the Society.

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As you review your end-of-year tax planning, please remember AVSA is a 501(c)3 organization and offers several giving opportunities. Donations may be sent to the AVSA Office or made online.

Giving Thanks

On behalf of the Executive Committee, I want to give a heartfelt thanks to everyone who makes AVSA so special. Thanks to the growers and hybridizers of African violets, our source of enjoyment, beauty and peace. Thanks to our talented AVSA staff — Amy, Stephanie, Sophia and Shirley — for keeping the office and AVM production running smoothly. Thanks to our AVSA Board and Committee members for volunteering your time and leadership skills. Thanks to all our members for growing African violets and sharing your passion for these wonderful plants with your friends and family.

'Tis the season for sharing, so please do. Often it takes just one leaf to spark interest in a new grower. It's well worth it.

Happy growing, showing and sharing!



Editor's Notes

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

The holiday season is upon us! Do you have a favorite tradition this time of year? Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday because I love to cook. Our celebration starts on Saturday, when we slaughter our own turkey and make bread that will turn into stuffing cubes. It culminates on Thursday with a huge feast. Our favorites include my grandma's icebox rolls, my husband's molded green Jello, homemade cranberry sauce and at least four kinds of pie (including chipotle pumpkin and apple-plum streusel). Typically, my big blended family would join us and extend our dining space all the way into the living room. This year, we may keep the celebration smaller because of COVID-19, but it will be no less enjoyable.

Speaking of seasons, a member wrote to me with an interesting question: Is there a correct season or time of year to repot African violets? The answer to that and other associated questions awaits you on page 30. Thanks to commercial members JoS Violets and Christopher Violets for helping me with this piece.

If you're looking for holiday gift ideas, flip straight to page 24 for a fun article on what AVSA Board and Committee members would like to receive this year. Mary Thompson shared that her small club does a gift exchange every year. Perhaps that's a new tradition you'd like to institute at your club?

One of the articles I'm most excited about in this issue is an interview with Dianne Duggan, President of the NASA Area AVS, who has taken her affiliate chapter from zero to 37 members in eight months. Wow! On page 10, she shares a host of ideas clubs can use to draw new members. Has your AVSA affiliate club had good luck attracting new members? Have you been able to partner with a school, local garden club or other organization with great success? I would love to include your thoughts in a follow-up article. Please email me your ideas.

Even though it's months away, I'm already getting excited about the AVSA Convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, from May 29 to June 5. I can't wait to take in all of the beautiful plants, learn new things and explore a city I've never visited before. If you're looking for something to do leading up to the event, why not grow a few violets for show? As you can see on page 54, there are some great cash prizes available for winners in a variety of categories. Maybe growing for show can be your New Year's resolution. The break right before New Year's Eve is a perfect time to learn something new.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Let me know what you think and what questions you have. May your celebrations the next few months be plentiful, merry and safe.

Correction: September/October 2021 AVM Becoming an AVSA Judge

A section of the third paragraph of this article was incorrect. It should read: "After three years of serving as a student judge, the level of advanced judge can be achieved. It takes a minimum of SIX

additional years as an advanced judge to become a senior judge."

We apologize for this error.



Shown by/photo credit: Vicki Ferguson

Amour Elite

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: E. Arkhipov
Standard



Marvelous Miniatures: Growing Your First Small Violets

By Sandra Skalski Mullica Hill, New Jersey

Email: publications@avsa.org

Miniature and semiminiature African violets come in every blossom color and leaf type. These lovely little plants can be grown in natural or artificial light and are especially good for growers who have windowsill space.

Smaller violet varieties are not merely standard violets grown to a small size. Genetically, they are programmed to grow small. Miniature violets grow to about 6 inches in diameter, while semiminiatures grow to 8 inches. These plants are not difficult to grow, but due to their small size, there are a few differences in their culture. Here are some tips to help you grow some beautiful miniature violets.

violets. Semiminiatures grow best in 2 1/4- to 2 1/2-inch pots, although some people grow them in 3-inch pots.

What might happen if you plant them in larger pots? In some cases, the plant will just grow to a larger size. For example, a miniature plant in a 2 1/2-inch pot may grow larger than 6 inches in diameter. However, some plants will suffer since their smaller root systems can't handle the volume of potting mix in the larger pot. Blooming will suffer as well.

Very tiny pots, around 1 inch in diameter, can be used to "miniaturize" miniature violets. The small pots will limit the size of the leaves and even the blossoms. The small size and low volume of potting mix make these plants a bit of a challenge for beginners.

This photo shows the types of pots that will work for your small violets. Small plastic cups work well and are inexpensive.



Petite Blarney: a miniature African violet that is easy to grow.

Size Matters

The size definitions for miniatures (6 inches) and semiminiatures (8 inches) are guidelines. They can each grow a bit larger, but if you'd like to enter your violet in a show, it must conform to those dimensions.

The smaller size of these plants requires smaller pots. The pot size rule of using a pot one-third the diameter of the leaf span does not apply to these plants. Two-inch to 2 1/4-inch pots are best for miniature



General Culture

Smaller pots mean a lower volume of potting mix. For this reason, it is a good idea to repot minis and semis more frequently than standard violets. Fertilizer salts can build up in the pot. Miniatures are prone to

orange crust, which shows up as a crusty coating on the center leaves. Recently repotted plants are often impacted since their root systems can't handle the fertilizer salts and water in the potting mix. You can gently wash this away under a stream of warm water. Gently dab the leaves to sop up excess water and let the plants dry out of the sun.

I repot my minis and semis two to three times per year. Necks seem to form rather quickly on miniature plants, as the outer rows of leaves are removed to keep the plants within bounds. Push the plant out of the pot and remove enough of the bottom of the root ball to seat the plant with the bottom row of petioles (leaf stems) even with the pot rim. I use a sharp knife for this. Remove the top layer of soil, as it tends to collect fertilizer salts. Place the plant in a clean pot and fill in the pot with soil to just below the lowest petioles.

You can water your mini violets the same way you water larger plants. However, since the root balls are small, wick watering works particularly well for miniatures. Growers have many options for attractive wicking reservoirs, many of which will look great in a home setting. The fertilizer routine you use for your standard plants will work for miniature violets. If you wick water, be sure to rinse out the reservoirs about once a month, as fertilizer salts tend to collect in reservoirs as the water evaporates.

Handy Tools

Some people avoid miniature violets because they think they are difficult to handle. While it's true that their small leaves can pose a challenge to large fingers, tools can make the job easier. Small, sharp tweezers can be used for grooming and removing leaves, as well as for setting the plant in the pot. A pair of manicure scissors does a great job of removing spent blossoms.

Getting potting mix underneath the small leaves can be problematic. I use a small, flat piece of flexible plastic as a leaf lifter. Slide the piece under the leaves and slip the soil underneath it into the pot. A squirt bottle comes in handy to water small plants.

Some varieties of minis and semis can be prone to developing suckers. Letting the plants dry out or

other stresses can exacerbate this condition. It's a good idea to check for suckers when you groom and water your plants. Remove them with sharp tweezers while they are small.



Favorite Varieties

Hybridizers are constantly introducing new varieties of miniature violets. These beautiful plants are symmetrical and floriferous, and there are so many to choose from. Here are a few “must haves” to consider for your collection. They are all easy to grow.

Miniatures: Precious Red, Jolly Orchid, Hunter's Chipmunk Cheeks, Shirl's Hawaiian Lei, Optimara Rose Quartz, Rob's Chilly Willy, Petite Blarney

Semiminiatures: Rob's Fuddy Duddy, Hunter's Sweet Sakura, Ness' Crinkle Blue, Cajun's Lil Sprinkles, Plumberry Glow, Jolly Jan, Tiptop

What's in Your Potting Mix?

By Joyce Stork

Email: joycestork@avsa.org

New growers often wonder about the best potting mix for African violets. While it is possible to purchase premade potting soil, you can also make it yourself.

A Facebook request for potting mix recipes in the African Violet Buddies group received 21 responses. The growers live in many places. Some wick-water, while others top or bottom water. Some grow for show; others just enjoy violets.

In general, the growers preferred peat-based mixes. Four shared similar formulas that also include a variety of other ingredients.

Karen Kelley's Mix (California, bottom water)

Equal parts peat moss and perlite (with no added chemicals or fertilizer)

Handful of azomite (a mineral-rich natural product mined in Utah)

Handful of horticultural charcoal

Lisa Bradley's Mix (Pennsylvania, wick-water)

Equal parts potting soil, perlite and peat

1 cup charcoal for every 3 to 4 cups soil

Suzanne Jensen's Mix (Sweden, bottom water)

3 parts ordinary potting mix

1 part perlite

1 part vermiculite

Natalie Lukashova's Mix (Florida, wick-water)

70% compressed Premier peat moss

30% coarse perlite

Some Osmocote fertilizer

Four growers shared recipes based on a specific commercial potting mix, along with a variety of additives.

Mary Corondan's Mix (Texas, mat-water)

3 quarts Pro-Mix BX Mycorrhizae

1 quart FoxFarm Ocean Forest

3 quarts plus 2 cups of coarse perlite

2 cups of coarse vermiculite

Immediately before potting, add Great White Premium Mycorrhizae (1/8 teaspoon mixed in 1 quart of water to dampen)

Beth Baker's Mix (Tennessee, wick-water)

5 quarts FoxFarm Light Warrior

2 1/2 quarts coarse perlite

1 ounce earthworm castings (sterilized in oven)

1 ounce dolomite lime

Dried molasses

1/8 teaspoon Great White Premium Mycorrhizae

Jere Trigg's Mix (Alabama, manual watering)

6 gallons Pro-Mix BX

2 gallons perlite

1 to 2 pints water (to reduce perlite dust)

1 cup Safer diatomaceous earth

3 tablespoons Soil Mender Dry Molasses

1 teaspoon Great White Premium Mycorrhizae

Trigg mixes this in a 10-gallon resealable plastic bag.

Lori Blotz's Mix (Wisconsin, top water)

50% Pro-Mix BX

40% #3 perlite

10% vermiculite

Mycorrhizae

Commercial Mixes and ...

Eight of the 21 participating growers buy a purchased mix and combine it half and half with coarse perlite. The brands mentioned were Pro-Mix HP, Pro-Mix HP with Biofungicide + Mycorrhizae, Pro-Mix BX, FoxFarm Ocean Forest, FoxFarm Light Warrior and FoxFarm Happy Frog.

Two growers suggested variations of the half and half mix. Eileen Czerniawski (Florida, wick-water) uses a 40% Black Gold and 60% coarse perlite mix. This is

probably useful in her tropical climate. Kathy Nolan (South Carolina, top/bottom water) uses 70% Pro-Mix HP with 30% perlite for her violets, which are grown inside clear plastic tubs with some venting.

One grower, Darylene Smith (Missouri, top water), uses Pro-Mix HP straight out of the bag. She finds this keeps her violets from drying out too fast.

Other Options

Debbie Stout (Montana, bottom water) shared this story in her response: “My mom and grandma grew African violets the ‘old-fashioned way’ using very rich, high-in-humus garden soil in clay pots and grown on north or east windowsills. They were on the sills winter or summer during the daytime and moved to a table away from the window during nights year-round. They stressed virgin soil if possible — they took dirt from mounds of gophers. My mom’s method worked for the dozen she had and for my grandma’s twenty plants because they checked their violets every day. Using that old-fashioned method, water

needs varied day by day, season by season and by the age of the plant.”

Today, Stout uses the recipe Pauline Bartholomew provided in her book, as does Veronica Evans (West Virginia, wick-water).

Pauline Bartholomew’s Mix

Source: “*Growing to Show*” (1985, 2008)

- 5 quarts dry peat moss
- 4 quarts #2 perlite
- 3 quarts vermiculite
- 1 cup charcoal (optional)
- 1 tablespoon superphosphate 0-20-0
- Dolomite lime to adjust the pH

What is best for you? Only time and experimentation can tell you that! If you have a mix you love, email your recipe to Editor Sophia Bennett (editor@avsa.org). She will consider including it in a future edition of *AVM*.

Violets Most Wanted List

By Mary Thompson, Chair, Violet Preservation Committee

Email: preservingviolets@avsa.org

If you have one of these violets, please email the Violet Preservation Committee with your contact information so we can pass it on to the person looking for that violet.

AVSA’s Most Wanted:

Admiral	Lonestar Lady	Ocean Eyes
Amethyst	Lonestar Snowstorm	Sailor Bill
Blue Boy	Mary Craig	Siberian Moon
Commodore	Mermaid	Viking
Helen Van Pelt Wilson	Norseman	#32

Marketing Affiliate Clubs: A Success Story

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

At a time when many affiliates are struggling to find new members, the NASA Area African Violet Society, located in the Bay Area of Houston and Galveston County, stands out as a big success story. The club was dormant for nearly a decade before it was revived in January 2021. In eight months, it has attracted 37 members.

Club President Dianne Duggan has a background in marketing, and she shared several ideas for affiliates looking to spread the word about their activities and reach new people.



Utilize Social Media

By far, Duggan's most powerful outreach tool has been Facebook. Most of the group's communication happens through the platform. This makes it easy to keep people informed, but it's also simple for members to widely share information about meetings, sales and other events.

Duggan and Keitha Graves, the club's Treasurer, are the admins on the Facebook group, and they work hard to make all posts welcoming and educational. They encourage people to ask questions, which

spurs interaction and relationship building and makes the page a valuable resource for people.

By far, Duggan's most powerful outreach tool has been Facebook.

Another way to make sure a social media group stays lively is to post on a regular basis. If the page looks static, people will be less likely to use it. Although the NASA Area group has primarily used Facebook, Duggan recently added an Instagram page. Her intention is to post there every day.

Duggan's work on social media goes far beyond her own club. "I belong to a lot of the groups like African Violet Buddies and African Violet Nerds, and if anybody happened to mention they were in our part of town, we would seek them out and send them a message and say, 'Hey, we have a club started,'" says Duggan.

Social media groups for lovers of all kinds of houseplants have boomed on- and offline over the past year. "During COVID, houseplants have become extremely important again," Duggan says. "It's almost like the 70s again."

She is a member of these Facebook groups, and in addition to sharing details about the affiliate club, she posts more general messages about African violets. "They're plant people, so I would post things like, 'If it's too hot to plant in your yard, plant in your light garden' and 'If it's too cold to plant in your yard, plant in your light garden.'" These friendly, fun notes remind people about African violets without

“selling” them on the club all the time, something that is important for social media (people will quickly tune out individuals who are constantly pushing their own agenda).

Stay Involved in the Community

The NASA Area AVS is involved in the community offline too. Through her involvement in Facebook groups, Duggan has gotten several invitations to speak at garden club events. “If they love gardening, they may not know it yet, but they’re going to love African violets and the other gesneriads,” she says. To find speaking engagements, be sure to reach out to actual clubs (not online gardening social groups) that organize regular meetings.

The affiliate participated in a recent community plant sale called Bloomin’ on the Bayou. While they didn’t sell plants because of concerns about the summer heat, members had a table with flyers and a small African violet display. Duggan’s intent was to show off that “these are not your grandmother’s violets. With the addition of all the Russian and Ukrainian violets and the wonderful hybridizers, there are so many interesting things to look at and enjoy.”

African violets are great plants for kids, who can care for and propagate them with relative ease. One of Duggan’s future goals is to approach schools and see if the club can organize programs to teach children about the plants. With many schools amping up their STEM curriculum and looking to add new science projects, this may be a welcome addition.

Word of Mouth Still Important

From her career in marketing, “I know that the power of the word is very important,” Duggan says. “I’ve given everyone in the club flyers, and I’ve emailed flyers, and we’re pushing people to think about, who do you know that might be interested in joining?” Besides handing out flyers, members are encouraged to approach their favorite garden shops and other stores and ask if they can post an informational flyer to a bulletin board.

Good Public Relations

Newspapers aren’t read as widely as they used to be, but there are plenty of people — especially older people — who still pick them up looking for local

news. Duggan sends information about affiliate meetings and events to all of the regional papers in her area and asks them to run an announcement in the “community briefs” section. These announcements are often free.

Duggan has also spread the word about the club by appearing on radio programs. In the Houston area, a local gardening enthusiast hosts a weekly home gardening show on AM radio. Many other communities offer similar programs through public access or National Public Radio affiliates. These programs are always looking for guests, so a well-educated African violet speaker is likely to be welcome.

Instead of radio, many on-air personalities are turning to social media or podcasts to reach their audience. Look for locals who host Facebook or Instagram Live events or put together regular podcasts. They may be able to reach your target audience just as effectively — and there is no cost to the club.

Make People Feel Welcome

Some old-fashioned kindness has helped the NASA Area AVS add members and keep existing ones coming back. “We have a hospitality team, so for everybody that walks in the door, we’re going to gather their information so we can invite them to the club and apprise them of other sales and events we’re going to have,” Duggan says.

Most of the affiliate’s members are in their 40s and 50s. To encourage these younger members to attend regularly, the club allows people to bring their children as long as they aren’t disruptive. “We have a member who brings her son because he is interested in plants. He may be our future grower,” Duggan says.

Encourage AVSA Membership

Another way to add value to an affiliate club is to connect members to AVSA. The NASA Area group doesn’t require members to join AVSA, but to encourage people to do it, “We offer 10 free raffle tickets when you bring in your receipt and show that you joined AVSA,” Duggan says. That small incentive has been enough to get several folks to sign on.



AV Creative Corner

By Rich Follett Strasburg, Virginia

Email: avcreativecorner@gmail.com

Hello, African violet friends, and welcome to the AV Creative Corner — a new *AVM* column that I am excited to have the privilege to write. Each issue of the *AVM* will feature new and engaging ways to be creative and celebrate the African violets we all love. I welcome your ideas and suggestions. Details about how to contribute are at the end of this column.

Time to create!

You don't have to have any experience with poetry to create a beautiful African violet haiku. Haiku is an ancient Japanese poem form that has been bringing beauty and joy to the world for hundreds of years. Creating haiku is easy, relaxing and fun. The formula is simple: a first line of five syllables, a second line of seven syllables and a third line of five syllables. Just think about what African violets mean to you — why you love them — and the rest should come easily.

If you are unsure about your syllables, clap out your words. Each clap is a syllable. You don't even need to worry about a title, although you may certainly give your haiku a title if you wish.

Here is a sample that I wrote in just a few minutes:

Windowsill beauties

Just like my grandmother grew:

Memories, blooming

One last helpful hint: If you make yourself a syllable diagram, you can write your syllables on the blanks. Here is my haiku one more time, written on a syllable diagram:

win - dow - sill beau - ties
Just like my grand - moth - er grew :
Mem - o - ries , bloom - ing

Please try your hand at one or more haiku of your own and send me the results at avcreativecorner@gmail.com. Your best efforts will appear in the January/February *AVM* Creative Corner column, as space permits.

Are you skilled at drawing or painting? How about turning your African violet haiku into a note card? Can you do needlework? How about a cross-stitch of your haiku for yourself or a lucky friend? Nothing says friendship like a handmade card or gift.

Happy haiku-ing!

If you have any ideas for future AV Creative Corner features, please send them to avcreativecorner@gmail.com. I am always eager to hear about new ways to express creativity. A byline will be given for all suggestions and submissions appearing in this column.

DRESS LIKE YOUR PLANT CONTEST

 **African
Violet
Society of
America**

- Take a photo of your violet.*
- Take or find a photo of yourself or a family member dressed up to match.* All ages, new photos or old!
- Get creative, get funky, get the family involved!

- Email photos to **marketing@avsa.org**

Entries must 1) be an AVSA member and 2) submitted no later than 12-31-2021.

- Winner announced in the May issue of the *African Violet Magazine* will win a Violet Art Print suitable for framing, created by artist Dianne Duggan.

•Submission of your photos indicates that:
1) you own the copyright of the photos, and
2) you are granting permission to AVSA to use the photos in social media or print.



AFRICANVIOLETSOCIETYOFAMERICA.ORG/DRESS-LIKE-YOUR-PLANT-CONTEST/



Registration Report

By Joe Bruns Hanover Park, Illinois

Email: jbruns@qwip.net

■ Patou Fuangaksorn — Pathum Thani, Thailand

Patou's Bon Bon

- (11327) 06/18/2021 •(P. Fuangaksorn)
- Single white frilled pansy/dark pink patches. Medium green, plain. •Standard

Patou's Pink Lavender

- (11328) 06/18/2021 •(P. Fuangaksorn)
- Single light lavender frilled pansy/pink eye, purple fantasy. Medium green, serrated.
- Semiminiature



Photo credit: Nina Starostenko

Star Trio

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: N. Starostenko
Semiminiature

Giving Tuesday: A Great Way to Support AVSA

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Are you about to make decisions concerning your Giving Tuesday or year-end charitable donations? I'm asking you to keep AVSA in your giving plans.

AVSA provides its members with so many important services. It sponsors great conventions and publications (both in the magazine and online) where people can learn about successfully growing and hybridizing African violets. The Society supplies judges for your local shows, aids in preserving the species and provides educational support for college students specializing in horticulture. All members get great customer service through our staffed office. I'm sure that you, like me, do not want to see any of these valuable benefits go away.

Like many nonprofits, it has been a tough few years for AVSA. We have had two cancelled national conventions, and these conventions are the largest income-generating events we have. The last quarter of the year is the lowest-income quarter for the Society. AVSA is operating in the red this year, but you can help us change that. Anything you can give will make a difference.

Donating is very easy. From November 28 to December 5, a special donation button will be available at www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org for your "Giving Tuesday" donations. Just click it and follow

the instructions. If you need to give closer to the end of the year, click the Donate button at the top of the website. You can also mail donations to the office.



I want to thank you in advance for your generous donations to help support AVSA. It truly is a great place to support, and one where you can see your dollars returned to you through consistent communication, information and service.

An Engineer's Approach to House Plant Care

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

House plants should bring you joy. Unfortunately, they're not always that simple. There's frustration when plants fail to thrive, worry when they look sick or bug infested, and guilt if they die. And all along this journey, there isn't always great information (especially online) about how to properly care for plants when they're unhealthy.

That was the challenge Toronto-based Darryl Cheng, author of the book "The New Plant Parent" (Harry N. Abrams, March 2019) and owner of the YouTube and Instagram sites @HousePlantJournal, faced when he got interested in house plants. The beginning of his effort to develop a green thumb came when his mother asked him to help decorate her house with plants. "She said, 'You have to learn how to take care of them because I'm bad with plants.' She fell back on this narrative of, 'Oh, I kill everything,'" he says.



When a plant started to look sickly, he did a Google search to try and determine the problem. What he found were a bunch of websites that repeated the same vague, generic information — things like "water enough but not too much" or "keep the plant in low light."

"For me as an engineer, that wasn't precise enough," he says. "I look for rules of how a system works to help me decide whether to do A or B. Not only was it not precise enough, it wasn't very reassuring. How could I know I would get good results?"

Cheng enjoys taking pictures, so he started taking videos and photos of his plants and posting them on YouTube and Instagram, along with "journal" entries sharing insights on how to care for specific plants. The account took off; today, he has more than 600,000 followers on Instagram, many of whom ask him questions about their plant problems. As a former math tutor, Cheng felt compelled to answer them, especially when he realized many of them were being repeated regularly. "You start to feel like, if all the people are asking you the same kinds of questions over and over, the advice they're reading is not conveying something critical."



Darryl Cheng's blooming African violet.

Cheng developed a website with research-based information as well as answers to common problems. His willingness to dole out advice led to a book that offers an engineer's take on growing green things indoors. He also offers a class that teaches

people both how to grow plants successfully and how to have the proper mindset for dealing with house plants.



His approach is nicely summed up by a quote on his website and Instagram page: “Happy plant owners appreciate the balance of environment, effort and expectations.” Here’s a closer look at each goal and how it applies to African violet care.

Environment

“Light levels are what dictate the growth potential of the plant,” says Cheng. “Your actions — fertilizing, watering, etc. — are only done to realize that potential.” As such, his top recommendation for growing African violets is to make sure they’re getting enough light. His sits under a 1,000-micromole LED light and is doing quite well there.

For people who are growing by windows, it might make sense to measure the amount of light the plants are receiving each day. Cheng recommends a light meter, which can provide a measurement of the sunlight in that location. According to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agriculture Studies, African violets need a minimum of 200 fc (foot-candles, or the amount of light generated by one candle placed one foot from the measurement device) to maintain good health and 400 fc for good growth. Consider these numbers a minimum.

Effort

Once you’re certain you have the right light, ensure the plant has proper levels of water and fertilizer.

“People often approach the subject of fertilizer as if it were a magical formula,” but different approaches will work for different people, Cheng says. He grows mostly tropical foliage plants and uses a 3-1-2 formula on everything. That’s even worked well to get his African violet to bloom repeatedly.

“Light levels are what dictate the growth potential of the plant.”

Expectation

One of Cheng’s top parameters for getting joy out of house plants is setting realistic expectations. “A lot of the time, people buy plants from grocery stores, and when the flowers die off, they think, ‘Well, what now? Is it dead? How do I get it to bloom?’” If they don’t know anything about the plant, they have no idea if it’s supposed to bloom regularly, once a year or only once.

Even though African violets are regular bloomers when cared for correctly, as plants grow and change, they may develop features people don’t like or get to a size that doesn’t seem fitting with a collection. “When we grow plants indoors, we think of them as being décor, so we want them to be perfect,” Cheng notes. “When you see a brown or yellow leaf, you may think, ‘What am I doing wrong?’ But if you go out into nature, you see yellow leaves everywhere.” Dying is part of the natural process for any plant.

The bottom line is this: If an African violet is no longer making you happy for whatever reason, it’s fine to throw it out. The goal is to gain enjoyment from house plants, not to fix every problem that comes along.

It’s also acceptable to gain pleasure from plants that, like everything in nature (including us), have some flaws and problems. “I’m happy with all of my plants. None of them are perfect, but I’m happy with them the way they are,” Cheng says.

Learning By Doing: Creating a Natural Garden

By Mary Lou Harden

Email: mlhard@verizon.net

The Greek philosopher Aristotle wisely said, “The things we have to learn before we do them, we learn by doing them.” It’s good to read the instruction manual on how to create a natural garden, but the lessons are not truly learned until you actually do a Natural Garden! And when you do, don’t try to imitate what someone else did. Use your imagination and come up with your own ideas. The following explains my journey into the field of design and creating award-winning Natural Gardens.

I grew up on a small farm in a rural town in midwestern Ohio (population: 600). Most of the people in my town were just like my family — poor. Everything we ate we grew, so each year we had a very large garden.

There was no internet and no shopping malls, but there was a 4-H and Future Farmers of America club. As a young teen, I was a member of the 4-H club and had my own flower garden. I loved all the wild flowers that grew in the countryside, but I especially loved all the beautiful flowers that were a part of MY flower garden — plants I had grown from seed.

As much as I loved those early years of flower gardening, lots of other activities soon got in the way. I no longer had any flowers in my life — until a colleague at work gave me a beautiful African violet for my birthday. There were actually three violets in the big pot, each one with dark purple blooms with white edges. It was beautiful.

However, I knew nothing about caring for African violets. Within just a few months, the violets were wilted and barely hanging on. When my parents came to visit, my mother took charge of them and was able to bring them back to life. When I saw them perky and blooming again, I was awestruck. I knew at once that I must pay attention and learn how to grow violets.

I attended a Tampa African Violet Society show and was especially intrigued by all the flower designs. I became an active member. The following year, as show time approached, I signed up for three designs although I had never made a flower design. I was quite proud of my designs. The judges, not so much. They did give me ribbons, but to my dismay, they were all white.

That didn’t dampen my spirit. Since that first show, I have entered the Design Division in every Tampa AVS show and have won Best in Show Design in many of them, as well as many Dixie AVS convention shows. I also won Best Container Garden at AVSA’s 2017 Orlando convention show.

Of course, the main focus of AVSA and affiliate-sponsored shows is the Horticulture Division. However, the creative part of me leans heavily toward design. Even though, as I found in my early years, learning how to put together a design is not difficult, I hope the following information regarding my way of creating Natural Gardens will help.

The Design Division of AVSA or affiliate shows is divided into three sections: Interpretive Flower Arrangements, Interpretive Plant Arrangements and Container Gardens. Natural Gardens are a part of the third section, which also includes Dish Gardens and Terrariums. According to AVSA’s “Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges,” a Natural Garden is defined as “a planting in a container formed from natural material such as weathered wood, lava rock or seashell. The container may have more than one planting area or pocket.”

Remember that in putting together a Natural Garden, you will be demonstrating your creativity. Your creation will evoke an emotional response from those who view it.



A Natural Garden designed by Mary Lou Harden.

Here are the steps I follow when creating a Natural Garden.

Read the Schedule

Are there any size or other limitations? Does it require a theme? AVSA suggests that there should not be any themes for Container Gardens. The exhibitor most likely will have an idea of what he/she wants to convey, but the schedule should not specify.

Think About the View

The Schedule should state whether the exhibit is to be viewed from the front only, or several or all sides. Why does this matter? If the exhibit can be viewed on all sides, that means great care must be taken to cover the back side of the exhibit so that it, too, will have a pleasing appearance.

Choose Your Container

Do you want to use driftwood? Rock? Shell? Make sure it fits the size requirements in all directions. Your container must be sturdy and easy to move.

Although I have used both lava rock and a seashell, I prefer using driftwood. Sometimes the driftwood "leans" or otherwise doesn't sit level, in which case you can add a small wedge of similar wood to stabilize it.

Construction

If you are using weathered wood, brush the wood on all sides or use an air hose to get rid of any loose debris, sand or hiding bugs. You can also soak the wood overnight.

Turn the wood different ways to find the best view. Over the years, I have used quite a few pieces of driftwood. Some had several natural planting areas. On others, I've had to slightly modify the wood by creating some pockets. To do this, select lightweight, thin pieces of tree bark. Break or cut them into shapes that fit into the line of your wood, then glue them in place. People will not be able to observe the tree bark once you've added your plants.



A piece of driftwood makes an ideal container for a Natural Garden.

Planting

The overall size of your container will determine the height of your plant material. Scale is important, so you must take into consideration the width and height of your container. Your design must have visual, if not actual, balance. It's also important to think about whether your plant material has a heavy or light appearance and how that will match with the wood.

When you are ready to plant, select well-groomed, clean, fresh plants of different sizes, textures and colors. As a general rule, I use five different kinds of plants, not including the violets. Examples include ferns, *Aralia*, *Episcia* or *Columnnea*. Remember that all plants must be planted in the container. No cut plant material is permitted.

Remove the plants from their pots, break off some of the soil around the roots then wrap the root ball in very wet sphagnum moss. Be generous with the amount of sphagnum moss you use; otherwise, the plants will dry out and become wilted. You can then wrap the root ball with a rubber band or wire to hold it together. Place your violet(s) last - so they will look perky and fresh.

Finish the design by covering any soil with fresh green moss, making sure that there is no trace of perlite or other obtrusive objects. Mist the arrangement often during the show, but keep heavy mist off the violet blossoms.

The AVSA Scale of Points for Container Gardens is:

- Landscape Plan: 40 points
- Suitability of Materials: 20 points
- Condition of Materials: 20 points
- Cultural Perfection: 10 points
- Relation to Container: 10 points

So now that you know just how easy it is to create a Natural Garden, how about signing up to make one for your club's next show? Remember: We learn by doing!

Atlanta 2023 Convention: New Convention and Show Chairs Needed

AVSA is looking for new Convention and Show Chairs to lead the 2023 AVSA Convention at the Sheraton Atlanta Hotel from May 27 to June 5, 2023. This is a wonderful way to give back to the Society, meet new people and explore Atlanta with fresh eyes.

Anyone who is interested in volunteering or getting more information should contact President Susan

Anderson at president@avsa.org or Convention Director Kathy Lahti at convention@avsa.org.

We are grateful to the current members of the Convention Committee, who had to step aside due to scheduling changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This group did an outstanding job of laying the groundwork for the 2023 Convention. We are very excited to see everyone in Atlanta in 2023.



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Shown by/photo credit: Wilhelmina Allen

Sundown Trail

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: H. Pittman
Semiminiature trailer



Shown by/photo credit: Candace Baldwin

Tommie Lou

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: T. Oden

Large



Photo credit: Natalia Kurilenko

KNN-Etual

Cyber Diamond Convention

Standard

Hybridized by: N. Kurilenko

Holiday Gift Guide

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

Are you looking for holiday gift ideas for an African violet lover in your life — or wondering what to put on your own wish list? More plants, plant stands and lights are always a good option; more space for plants isn't something most of us can control. Beyond that, members offered a few thoughts on special products they'd like to see wrapped and waiting for them.

Jewelry Scoop and Tweezers (\$5.64 on Amazon)

Although they're intended for picking up beads and making jewelry, the small metal scoop and tweezers recommended by AVSA Director Mary Thompson is also great for African violet lovers. The tweezers are perfect for removing suckers and other unwanted objects on plants. The scoop is ideal when a pot needs just a smidge more potting mix.

When Thompson was President of her small club, which she also founded, she did a gift exchange one year to show appreciation for all the members. The tradition has continued, and each year, every member gives a small gift to everyone else. This works because the club is small, Thompson notes, but it's something people look forward to every year.

Plastic Candy Scoop (\$6.99 for a pack of 12 on Amazon)

Although these narrow scoops are intended to be used to scoop candy, coffee, tea, protein powder or other items from containers, they work great for depositing a small amount of soil where it's needed. Thompson buys them and gives the scoops away to club members as raffle prizes, but they could be great for stocking stuffers or a gift exchange.

Violet Kitchen Utensils (various prices)

Do you have a friend who loves cooking and African violets? Remind them of one hobby while engaging

in the other with a violet spatula, measuring cup and spoon set, whisk and other brightly-hued kitchen utensils. This idea comes courtesy of Jeri Anderson.



"You Can Grow African Violets" (\$16 AVSA members/\$18.95 cover price)

"You Can Grow African Violets," written by Kent and Joyce Stork in 2008, remains one of the best tomes on African violets available. It comes highly recommended by Candace Baldwin.

"This book is great for the novice or experienced grower," she says. "It covers all the basic growing elements of light, soil and water, then discusses maintenance and propagation, among other things. It has a section with interesting topics that go beyond the fundamentals and finishes with a section that's just for fun." Members can get a discount on this book by purchasing it in the AVSA Store.

Digital USB Microscope — 1600x (\$25 at www.ghviolets.com)

Want a closer look at your plants and any critters that may be bothering them? This digital microscope, which connects to a computer with a USB

cable, is the perfect way to do it. An LED light does a great job of illuminating any plant. Buttons allow you to zoom in on the plant and take photographs of it. Check the specifications carefully; although the microscope comes with software that can be downloaded to computers with Windows, the buttons don't work when connected to Android devices or Macbooks.



Indoor Bug Catcher (various prices)

Are your plants troubled by flying pests? An option for killing off them without chemicals is an indoor bug zapper or other insect trap. Several brands make small bug zappers that plug into the wall and attract insects with light before killing them. The typical range for these devices is \$15 to \$20 for a two pack.

If the zapping noise isn't your thing, try a product like Katchy, which also attracts bugs with lights but uses a replaceable glue sheet to trap them. Katchy offers two different traps that cost \$39.79 and \$41.79.

Tierra Garden One Piece

Potting Tray (\$38.99 on Amazon)

The tray looks like a tall dustpan without a handle and provides a convenient place to repot plants without creating a mess. "One of our members has one and demonstrated its use at a meeting. So practical!" says AVSA First Vice President Mary Corondan. "It makes for an easy cleanup with no newspapers to throw away. Since it is so wide, there is less spilling of soil."

Waterproof Label Maker (\$49.99 on Amazon)

"The ultimate luxury for me would be to have a waterproof label maker so I could label pots more legibly," says Joyce Stork. The one she found is advertised specifically for labeling pots. It is rechargeable, so there is no need to replace batteries. It also has Bluetooth capability so that labels can be designed and printed from a smartphone, "which allows me to copy and paste complicated names for better accuracy." Labels are sold separately.

Heated Propagation Kit (\$79.95 on Amazon)

Stephen Covolo-Hudson recommends buying the serious African violet grower a self-contained propagation unit. His favorite comes with a T5 light bulb and can be used to grow plants, start seeds, propagate cuttings or as a quarantine chamber. "The biggest plus is that it can be daisy chained together so you can connect more than one unit," he says. "Another plus is the seedling heat mat," which keeps the babies cozy and warm.

Support AVSA when you shop!



Did you know that Amazon has a program for shoppers to designate a charity of their choice, and Amazon will contribute a portion of every dollar you spend? Here's an easy way to support the African Violet Society of America at NO EXTRA COST TO YOU!

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AVSA's Best Varieties List for 2021

By Trudy Brekel Littleton, Colorado

Email: bestvariety@avsa.org

Welcome to AVSA's 2021 Best Varieties List. Thank you to all who participated this year. A total of 188 members voted and cast a total of 940 votes. That is a good count for only having two months to vote.

The Best Varieties List helps growers learn about violet varieties that are easy and enjoyable to grow. Hybridizers with several cultivars on the list probably have plenty of other hybrids growers will love. Read the descriptions and choose your new favorites for your collection.

To vote for your favorites, fill out the form on the AVSA website and mail it in, or use our online voting system. Voting will begin in May 2022 and close June 30, 2022. Watch for more voting information in future issues of *African Violet Magazine*, *AVSA Growing Tips* and on AVSA's social media sites.

1. Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler

- (8745) 07/27/1998 •(P. Hancock)
- Semidouble bright pink ruffled pansy/variable raspberry fantasy; raspberry edge.
- Variegated dark green, cream and pink, plain, glossy/red back. •Large (DAVS 1621).

2. Ness' Crinkle Blue

- (8136) 01/19/1995 •(D. Ness)
- Double dark blue star/variable thin white edge.
- Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back.
- Semiminiature.

3. Rob's Vanilla Trail

- (9296) 11/21/2003 •(R. Robinson)
- Double cream to blush white pansy.
- Dark green, quilted, serrated, pointed.
- Semiminiature trailer.

4. Buckeye Seductress

- (9669) 07/13/2006 •(P. Hancock)
- Double dark lavender star/wide white band, green edge.
- Variegated medium green and cream, plain.
- Large (DAVS 1632).

5. Jersey Snow Flakes

- (9820) 12/14/2007 •(R. Kurzynski)
- Single-semidouble white pansy/white sparkle overlay.
- Variegated medium green and white, plain, quilted. •Standard.

6. Precious Red

- (9724) 01/15/2007 •(H. Pittman)
- Semidouble-double dark red pansy.
- Dark green, plain/red back. •Miniature.

7. Rob's Boolaroo

- (8053) 03/05/1994 •(R. Robinson)
- Semidouble light pink sticktite pansy/bright blue fantasy.
- Medium green, quilted. •Semiminiature trailer.

8. Rose Bouquet

- (9028) 04/12/2001 •(G.T. Smith)
- Double pink frilled star/darker eye.
- Mosaic variegated medium green, pink and white, plain, quilted. •Standard.

9. Picasso

- (6924) 10/04/1988 •(M. Tremblay)
- Double light blue and white/variable white fantasy.
- Variegated medium green, plain/silver-green back. •Large (CA).

10. Frozen in Time

- (9167) 02/03/2003 •(Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano)
- Single-semidouble white pansy/variable lavender tinge; green edge.
- Variegated light green and ivory, quilted.
- Standard.

11. Tiger

- (3433) 06/01/1978 •(I. Fredette)
- Semidouble dark blue-violet.
- Variegated. •Large.

12. Buckeye Nostalgia

- (10484) 01/05/2012 •(P. Hancock)
- Semidouble pale blue ruffled pansy.
- Variegated medium green and cream.
- Standard (DAVS 1753).

13. Irish Flirt

- (7577) 11/07/1991 •(S. Sorano)
- Double bright green and white frilled star.
- Medium green, wavy. •Semiminiature.

14. Pixie Blue

- (2598) 09/16/1974 •(L. Lyon)
- Single purple-blue/darker center.
- Plain, ovate. •Miniature trailer.

15. Jolly Orchid

- (9719) 01/15/2007 •(H. Pittman)
- Double orchid and white pansy.
- Medium green, plain, quilted.
- Miniature (TX Hyb, DAVS 1661).

16. Bob Serbin

- (8292) 09/21/1995 •(J. Brownlie)
- Semidouble red sticktite pansy/thin white edge.
- Dark green, quilted, serrated/red back.
- Standard (CA).

17. Carolina Elegant Affair

- (10913) 07/31/2017 •(L. Abplanalp)
- Single-semidouble white ruffled star/pink patches.
- Variegated medium green and white, quilted, wavy. •Standard.

18. Edge of Darkness

- (10677) 03/19/2014 •(Paul Sorano/Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses)
- Semidouble dark purple star/frilled white edge.
- Variegated dark green and ivory, serrated/red back. •Large.

19. Kentucky Gooseberries

- (D. Rollins)
- Double white star/light pink blush.
- Medium green, serrated.
- Semiminiature (DAVS 1602).

20. Powwow

- (7708) 06/15/1992 •(K. Stork)
- Semidouble red pansy.
- Variegated green and cream, plain. •Standard.

21. Rainbow's Quiet Riot

- (R. Wasmund)
- Semidouble blue-purple large star/white fantasy.
- Dark green, round, scalloped. •Standard.

22. Rob's Fuddy Duddy

- (7886) 06/02/1993 •(R. Robinson)
- Semidouble dark mauve-purple sticktite pansy.
- Dark green, quilted. •Semiminiature.

23. Blue Dragon

- (9516) 12/17/2005 •(Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/P. Sorano)
- Double light blue large frilled star/raspberry edge.
- Dark green, plain/red back. •Large.

24. Hunter's Kashmir

- (11227) 07/17/2019 •(K. Muzalewski)
- Semidouble lavender frilled pansy/purple edge.
- Variegated dark green and cream, ruffled. •Large.

25. Ness' Satin Rose

- (8144) 01/19/1995 •(D. Ness)
- Double rose-mauve two-tone star.
- Dark green, quilted, scalloped/red back.
- Semiminiature.

Nutrient Deficiency in African Violets

Editor's note: Are your plants plagued by problems? If your foliage is too pale, too dark, developing brown spots or brittle, a nutrient deficiency may be to blame. The African Violet Society of America's website, www.africanvioletocietyofamerica.org, has a host of articles on topics such as this. If nutrient deficiency doesn't seem to be your problem, or if you'd like to easily share this article with someone else, visit the website for help. From the main page, click on Violets 101, then Read Articles, then Pests and Disease. This information appeared on a hand-out shared at an AVSA Convention in a program presented by Dr. Charles Cole.

About Nutrient Deficiency in African Violets

Many factors relate to nutrient deficiencies. It is more than just a lack of fertilizer. Temperature affects how a nutrient is absorbed or how it functions. Light changes may deplete nutrients rapidly (e.g., bleaching.) Water availability is critical to plant functions and nutrient uptake. Soil pH controls how nutrient is absorbed. Good cultural practices will maximize your violet's use of nutrients. Poor practices may result in deficiencies.

Even in the worst cultural conditions, African violets are efficient at storing and transferring scarce nutrients to maintain life in the center of the crown. As a result, the symptoms of deficiency develop over time. Deficiencies are rarely instantly apparent. In most cases, macronutrient deficiency is seen on the whole plant or outside leaves, while symptoms of micronutrient deficiencies will appear in the center newest leaves.

Symptoms Related to a Deficiency of Specific Nutrients

These effects are generalized or primarily seen on older leaves. They include yellowing or drying up of

older leaves. At acute stages, plants will develop a red or purple color in the lower leaves.

Nitrogen deficiency: Color fades, beginning with the tips and margins of leaflets, until all foliage becomes a lighter green than normal. In time, the color may fade to pale yellow. In extreme cases, the margins of lower leaves become devoid of chlorophyll and curl, sometimes "firing." Stunted overall growth and loss of leaves are characteristic.

Phosphorous deficiency: The foliage becomes crinkly and dark green. In acute cases, older leaves become purplish. The plants are stiffly erect. Petioles, leaflets and leaf margins take an upward direction. Leaflets are often cup-shaped (spooned). The leaves fail to grow to a normal size. Cell division slows, causing a lack of roots and/or flowers.

These effects are localized on older leaves, occurring as mottling or chlorosis, with or without necrotic spots, but with little drying of older leaves.

Magnesium deficiency: The plant's older leaves are lighter green than normal. Chlorosis begins at the tips and margins of the lowermost leaves and progresses between veins toward the center of leaflets. Eventually, the tissue between veins is filled with brown dead areas. Definite bulging between veins and thickening of foliage occurs. Affected leaves are brittle.

Potassium deficiency: The foliage is darker green than normal. Leaves will be reduced in size. Internodes remain short. Plants have a humped-up, recurved appearance. Foliage becomes crinkled and veins appear sunken. Later, the older leaves become slightly yellow, then bronzing develops from the tips and margins and gradually involves the entire plant.

Zinc deficiency: The older leaves are chlorotic and develop grayish-brown to bronze irregular spots. This usually happens first on leaves midway in the plant but eventually affects all foliage. Spots become sunken and involved tissue finally dies. In extreme cases, internodes remain short, and the leaves remain small and thick. Spots develop on petioles and stem. The top leaves assume a slightly vertical position and the margins of leaves may curl upward.

These effects are localized on the newer leaves of the plant. You will see unusual distortions at the tips or bases of the young leaves making up the terminal bud, followed by the terminal bud (center growth) dying.

Boron deficiency: The young leaves of the terminal bud are lighter green than normal, with the lighter color being most pronounced at the base. The stem tip may die or be distorted. The internodes remain shortened, giving the plant a bushy appearance. The leaves become thickened and roll upward and the leafstalks become brittle. Anthocyanin (purple pigment) may develop. Leaf tips and margins, especially of older leaflets, may die prematurely.

Calcium deficiency: The earliest symptom is a light-green band along the margins of young leaflets of the terminal bud. Such areas often die, giving leaflet a crinkled or buckled appearance. In some cases, young leaves at the top remain folded, causing the tips to die. The margins of the leaflets often roll upward. Axillary buds (suckers) may show the same symptoms as the terminal bud.

If the terminal bud remains alive, you see chlorosis of newer leaves with or without spots of dead tissue, and the veins are light or dark green, these are the likely causes.

Copper deficiency: The young leaves of the terminal bud are lighter green than normal, the lighter color being most pronounced at the base. Stem tips may die or be distorted. The internodes remain shortened, giving the plant a bushy appearance. Leaves become thickened and roll upward and leafstalks become brittle. Anthocyanin (purple pigment) may develop. The tips and margins, especially of older leaflets, die prematurely.

Iron deficiency: A slightly uniform chlorosis first develops in the young leaves. The tips and margins maintain a green color the longest. The principal veins retain a normal green color. Affected tissue gradually becomes pale yellow. The foliage becomes white in extreme cases. No dead spots are evident.

Manganese deficiency: Areas that are lighter green than normal first develop between the veins of the leaves and in the tops of stems. These areas may become yellow to white. Numerous small brown patches develop and, in time, become more extensive. The lower leaves are the least affected. A mild shortage will cause only slight chlorosis, chiefly confined to the upper parts of the stem, and no dead spots develop.

Sulfur deficiency: Symptoms develop slowly. A general yellowing of the leaves and veins occurs, similar to that in nitrogen deficiency without the leaves drying up. Growth of the plant is materially checked. Some spotting of the leaves occurs if the shortage is acute or prolonged.

When Is the Best Time to Repot?

By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

Is there a prime time during the year to repot? How frequently should it be done, and why do people repot when they do?

I put these questions to two Commercial Members: Joanne Schrimsher with JoS Violets and Steve Scheuerman, who co-owns Christopher Violets with Brent Scheuerman. The answers, of course, depend a lot on a person's goals and situation.

How Do You Know It's Time to Repot?

Schrimsher repots her show plants every three months, since she wants them to be at their best and blooming on a regular schedule. The plants she sells are repotted every four months. "If you wait five or six months or more, you get fertilizer buildup and the soil gets packed down and you don't get the oxygen you need," she says.

Growers should also watch for signals that an individual plant is ready for a bigger home. If the width of the plant is reaching more than three times the width of the container, it's time to repot, says Scheuerman. "If you have roots coming out of the center hole, I don't care if it's been one month or six months, it needs to be repotted." Should the center of the plant start to look strangely small, that's probably an indication that the roots no longer have enough space to develop.

When repotting, don't go up more than one pot size, he added. "Your plant will sit there and say, 'I don't know what to do except to die.' African violets like their roots to be almost root bound. And they don't grow down, they grow out." A pot that's too big will overwhelm the plant.

Is There a Best Time of Year to Repot?

Schrimsher uses "Llewellyn's Moon Sign Book" (Llewellyn Publications, 2021) to determine the best

times to repot. "I started only repotting on semi-fruitful and fruitful days or nights," she says. "When it's barren, I don't repot. I rarely lose a little plant."

In general, there is no best time of year to repot. "You can do it in the dead of winter or the heat of the summer," says Scheuerman.

Farmers' Almanac also has a Gardening by the Moon calendar. According to www.farmersalmanac.com, "This planting calendar helps you pick the best dates for popular garden tasks — starting seeds, pruning shrubs, harvesting, weeding, and much more — according to our 200-year-old formula that relies on phases and position of the Moon." The current month's calendar is available for free on the publication's website and notes days that are good for transplanting.

In general, though, there is no best time of year to repot. "You can do it in the dead of winter or the heat of the summer," says Scheuerman.

It may be worth getting on your own schedule to remember when to repot. If your goal is to repot every four months, for example, set a specific day or timeframe such as the first day of the month, the first Saturday or the first day of each new season.

Tips for Repotting Successfully

Repotting is a perfect time to get the plant into fresh soil that's light and airy. "When you repot them, it's not like repotting a philodendron," says Scheuerman. "When you repot those, you push down on the soil so there's no air in them. African violets want air. They want that soil to be loose enough that they don't have to fight to grow." The roots need access to air, and if they get too waterlogged, they're likely to rot.

When repotting to a larger container, Scheuerman puts a layer of perlite in the bottom before adding slightly damp soil. Put enough on the bottom and sides to make a hole the size of the existing container. That makes a perfect opening for the plant.

If the root ball will fit in the new container, Scheuerman encourages people not to disturb it other than to gently tease out a few roots. Think of it as tickling the plant. "Let them know there's a place to go, but you don't want to disturb them too much because they'll become prone to disease."

If the root ball comes apart on its own, "that just means your soil was nice and light," says Scheuerman. "It will recuperate." Don't panic, and don't push the roots together. Just let the plant sit naturally in the container.

Gently add additional mix as needed to fill the new pot, then top water once. This will help the potting mix settle into place.

Scheuerman encourages people not to disturb the root ball other than to gently tease out a few roots. Think of it as tickling the plant.

After repotting, Schrimsher typically lets her plants sit for 12 to 24 hours before placing them in front of their light source or watering them (unless they've completely dried out; then she gives them water immediately). This gives them time to rest before being moved to a new environment.

"If you're cutting roots off, it's a good idea to wait to fertilize," says Schrimsher. However, if you're simply trimming off the bottom of the root ball so the roots will fit in the pot, it's fine to stay on your regular fertilizing schedule.

African Violet Magazine Article and Column Deadlines

- January/February issue: November 1
- March/April issue: January 1
- May/June issue: March 1
- July/August issue: May 1
- September/October issue: July 1
- November/December issue: September 1

We would love to hear from you! Please send articles or article ideas for the AVM to Sophia Bennett at editor@avsa.org.

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Family Portrait: *Henckelia* 'Moon Walker'

By Mel Grice Englewood, Ohio

Email: melsgrice@gmail.com

Henckelia (henk-EL-ee-a) is a genus in the gesneriad family with around 64 recognized species. The plant is found in Sri Lanka, southern and northeastern India, Nepal, Bhutan, southern China, northern Vietnam, northern Laos and northern Thailand. New species are still being discovered.

Many of you may remember the plant under its former genus name, *Chirita*. All of the known species of *Chirita* (*Henckelia*, *Damrongia*, *Liebegia*, *Microchirita* and *Primulina*) were assigned to five existing, new or resurrected genera in 2011. This may change again; who knows? So have your labels on standby.

Henckelia 'Moon Walker' is a hybrid created by Masaki Yamagata by crossing *Henckelia moonii* and *Henckelia walkerae*. It has attractive purple flowers that feature a prominent white throat and yellow stripes. The large flowers are not produced in any great profusion, but they make a nice contrast to the medium-green foliage. The leaves' silvery hairs give the plant a sparkling look when viewed in the sunlight.



Henckelia 'Moon Walker'. Photos by Ron Myhr.

This hybrid can become quite large if given room to grow. It is an excellent plant for a sunny window or greenhouse. It grows well for me under lights, but it will soon crowd out everything on the shelf if the growing points are not pinched out from time to time. Pinching the tips makes the plant branch from the stems and base, making for a fuller-looking plant. The tip cuttings are easily rooted by applying rooting gel to the cut end and placing the plants in your regular soilless potting mix.

Dale Martens played a role in spreading this wonderful hybrid around. In the Second Quarter 2012 issue of *Gesneriads*, she shared that she corresponded with Yamagata in 1997 because they were both hybridizing *Smithianthas*. When he mailed her a package of plant material, it included 3-inch sticks with green bumps surrounded by moist sphagnum and a note identifying the plants.

"When I saw the parentage, I smiled at the clever name combining the parents' names, but also because we lived close to NASA and saw astronauts on a daily basis," Martens reported. "It didn't take long for these sticks to produce roots and leaves. At the next Gesneriad Hybridizers Association meeting, I distributed as many plants as I could propagate of *H.* 'Moon Walker' as well as his *Smithiantha* hybrids."

Thank you to Martens and Yamagata for making this plant available to American growers.



Shown by/photo credit: Laura Leonard

Mac's Elegant Emerald

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: G. McDonald
Semiminiature



Shown by/photo credit: Laura Leonard

Rob's Boolaroo

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: R. Robinson

Semiminiature trailer



Photo credit: Zlata Metlushko

***Streptocarpus* 'ZM-Charodei'**

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: Z. Metlushko

75th Anniversary: Maintaining Proper Humidity and Temperature

Winter is well on its way, which means temperatures are dropping across the country. Winter can also be a tricky time to maintain proper humidity around African violets. The following compilation of past articles from *African Violet Magazine* provides information on why temperature and humidity are important, as well as tips for keeping plants at proper levels this season.

To be successful growing African violets in the home, it is important to know and understand the environment in which African violets grow naturally. African violet species are found in the Usambara Mountain district of Tanzania in East Africa. Depending on the species, the plants can be found from high mountain regions (7,000 feet) to the low foothills. Although this area is considered tropical, wild African violets tolerate a large temperature range because of the temperature differences at different altitudes. African violet species grow under tree canopies and are therefore protected from the hot sun. The plants can usually be found in a fairly humid place: in or near decaying forest material, in a rock ledge near a waterfall or growing near a riverbank.

Temperature

Although African violets in the wild can grow in temperatures between 40 and 80 degrees F, today's hybrid plants prefer temperatures ranging from 65 to 75 degrees F. They were developed from the warm species, which is why the best temperatures for them are those comfortable for humans. (For more information on warm climate African violets, see Dr. Jeff Smith's article in the September/October 2021 issue of *AVM*.)

When plants are exposed to excessively high temperatures (over 80 degrees F) for extended periods of time, flower production will decline and blossoms

that do open will be smaller than usual. Bloom stalks will also droop, and the blossoms will shrivel up and turn brown within a few days.

Although African violets in the wild can grow in temperatures between 40 and 80 degrees F, today's hybrid plants prefer temperatures ranging from 65 to 75 degrees F.

Like other living organisms, the metabolism of the plant will increase in higher temperatures, resulting in greater transpiration or loss of water through the leaves. To compensate, the plant will increase water uptake through its roots. In time, the plant will not be able to keep up with the water loss and it will wilt.

Another consequence of high temperatures is that the plant will absorb too much fertilizer with the increased water uptake. This will result in burned edges on new foliage in the crown.

African violets can tolerate temperatures above 75 degrees F, but growth will slow down at 60 degrees F and stop around 50 degrees F. When plants are exposed to low temperatures (approaching 60

degrees F or below), their metabolism begins to decrease. Few flowers will be produced, and blossoms that do open will be discolored and deformed. The foliage will become turgid and curl downward at temperatures below 60 degrees F. Leaves that begin to curl up and seem to be almost clinging to the pot can also be a sign that you have mites, so be sure to check carefully to see if you have a bug problem. Plants will stop growing and eventually die if temperatures fall below 50 degrees F.

Temperatures in growing areas are easily controlled with central air conditioning and heat. However, do not place the plants in areas with direct exposure to the air vent. Like you, African violets do not like drafts.

Good air circulation is important to maintaining the microenvironment. It will also inhibit development of some diseases, as it does not allow organisms such as powdery mildew to settle on plants. This is especially important in the early spring and summer months, when temperature fluctuations are common. If the violets are in a room with poor air circulation, it may be a good idea to place a small fan in the space. Just make sure it is not blowing air directly on the plants.

If you notice your violets have white spots, streaks or blotches on the leaves, you may be watering with water that is too cold. Getting plants to an area with a warmer room temperature may work equally well to eliminate the white areas.

If plants are placed by a window that may be cold at night or any area that has cold drafts, you might try moving your plants to the kitchen at night. There may be extra warmth from the refrigerator and other running appliances.

Humidity

Humidity is the amount of water vapor in the air that can be measured using a hygrometer. African violets have thick, fleshy leaves that require high humidity. In nature, wild African violets thrive in humidity between 60 and 80%. It would be difficult to live in a house with even 60% humidity, so the African violet hobbyist should try to maintain humidity levels between 40% and 60% — the higher the better.

Most humidity problems occur when levels get too low. Proper humidity promotes good plant growth. As the humidity level drops, plant growth will decline and the foliage will lose its normal healthy luster and sheen. More importantly, low humidity levels will affect the blossoms. Blooms will be small and sparse, and buds will dry up before they open.

When humidity levels are too high, water will not evaporate from the leaves. This means more water containing fertilizer will not move up the plant and the plant will starve. The leaves may be undersized and rot may develop. Powdery mildew will thrive, especially if the temperature is also too low.

Most homes are generally quite dry, especially in the winter months. Heated air holds more moisture than colder air, so as the temperature increases, the relative humidity decreases. Therefore, many homes dry out in the winter months when the heating system is on.

Luckily, humidity levels are relatively easy to control. To increase the humidity in the plant area, place bowls of water among the plants, or use humidifiers and cool vaporizers in the room. The plants can also be placed on capillary mats or trays covered with wet pebbles or sand.

You might also switch to wick watering, at least for the winter. Growers who wick water do not generally have a humidity problem.

Sources:

1. Gardner, Sue, "Air Pollution, Drafts and Humidity Will Affect Your Plants." *AVM*. January 2003.
2. Godeny, Elmer, "Temperature and Humidity." *AVM*. January 2004.
3. Goretsky, Laurel D., "Small Talk." *AVM*. March 2010.
4. Tinari, Anne, "Seasonal Suggestions." *AVM*. March 1980.

Getting to Know Irina Zaikina, Hybridizer from Kazakhstan

Irina Zaikina of Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, has been fascinated with African violets since studying forestry and landscape gardening at the Kazakhstan Agricultural Institute in the late 1990s. After 10 years of collecting numerous specimens, including older Boris Makuni varieties and the latest introductions from domestic and foreign hybridizers, Zaikina decided to try hybridizing herself. The world is glad she did, because she has created several beauties, including the cover photo from the September/October issue of *African Violet Magazine* (originally called KZ-41-21 and now named KZ-Tainy Versalia).



To help North American growers get to know Zaikina better, she answered some questions about herself, her work as a hybridizer and her African violet culture. Thank you to Vladimir Kalgin for help facilitating this article.

Where do you find inspiration for your work?

In our city, there is a club of enthusiastic like-minded people that was formed by Elena Kanapina back in the 1970s. Since the Soviet times, the club allows growers to communicate, exchange experiences, participate in annual shows, share the joy of this hobby and be updated with the latest news and

events in African violet life. Today, there are 10 growers in the club. We gather monthly in the auditorium of the Almaty Botanical Garden.



Top Photo: KZ-Miss-Ocharovanie. Middle Photo: KZ-Tamada. Bottom Photo: KZ-Baryshnia-Krestianka.



Top Photo: KZ-Mirazh. Bottom Photo: KZ-Khrabroe-Serditse.

What is your approach or philosophy when hybridizing?

For me, hybridizing is, first of all, about identifying the advantages and disadvantages of seedlings.

Candidates must be fast-growing and easy to grow, with beautiful self-forming foliage and a cap of bright, large flowers. Slow growing, rapidly-aging lower leaves; asymmetrical rosettes; weak flower stalks; and quickly fading, falling and rarely-flowering seedlings with defective genes are considered disadvantaged and are not selected for varieties. Selecting only for decorative qualities is not justified. In the end, any blooming violet is beautiful, but only varieties with the best qualities inevitably become universal favorites and winners of shows. In my work, I try to find “perfect” violets. I devote all my efforts to flowers that willingly reciprocate and forget about those that stubbornly do not want to cooperate.

What advice do you have for other African violet hybridizers?

Be persistent in achieving your goals and experiment until you succeed.

What is your current African violet culture?

Fortunately, I have a “violet room” of about 380 square feet, where optimal (light, temperature, humidity) conditions are created for growing violets. To grow beautiful and healthy flowers, it is necessary to include time with them in your daily schedule. It is very important to ensure timely repotting, watering, fertilizing and treatment of pests and diseases.

Violet Preservation Committee Undertakes New Matching Program

The Violet Preservation Committee has initiated an exciting new matching program. Members seeking specific African violets may make a request and potentially be matched with a grower or supplier of the plant. If you've ever wanted a violet but didn't know where to find it, now is the time to make a request.

The program is available on the AVSA website under the Participate tab. Look for the link that says Most Wanted Violets. People looking for plants can also make a request by contacting Mary Thompson, Violet Preservation Committee Chair, at preservingviolets@avsa.org.

AVSA Honor Roll of African Violets

By Trudy Brekel Littleton, Colorado

Email: bestvariety@avsa.org

Congratulations to the winners of this year's Honor Roll of African Violets. There are two plants that made the list this year. One is a beautiful standard and the other is a beautiful trailer.

To be on the Honor Roll of African Violets, a variety must have appeared in the Best Varieties List for three consecutive years. Even though a plant can only be on the Honor Roll one time, we have a plant, Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler, that has made the first choice of the Best Varieties List three years in a row. That says a lot about this amazing plant.

■ 2000

- Powwow •(7708) (K. Stork)
- Rob's Sticky Wicket •(6467) (R. Robinson)

■ 2001

- Windy Day •(7719) (Stork/Boone)

■ 2002

- There were no 2002 additions to the Honor Roll

■ 2003

- Rainbow's Quiet Riot •(R. Wasmund)

■ 2004

- Frozen In Time •(9167) (S. Sorano)
- Orchard's Bumble Magnet •(8479) (R. Wilson)

■ 2005

- Rebel's Splatter Kake •(8695) (R. Bann)

■ 2006

- There were no 2006 additions to the Honor Roll

■ 2007

- ACA's Red Ember •(8732) (J. Brownlie)

■ 2008

- Blue Dragon •(9516) (L. Lyon Greenhouses/
P. Sorano)

■ 2009

- Bob Serbin •(8292) (J. Brownlie)

■ 2010

- There were no 2010 additions to the Honor Roll

■ 2011

- Plumberry Glow •(9187) (L. Lyon Greenhouses/
P. Sorano)

■ 2012

- There were no 2012 additions to the Honor Roll

■ 2013

- Harbor Blue •(6174)

■ 2014

- Rob's Chilly Willy •(8170) (R. Robinson)
- Rob's Fuddy Duddy •(7886) (R. Robinson)

■ 2015-2017

- There were no additions these years to the Honor Roll

■ 2018

- Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler •(8745) (P. Hancock)
- Buckeye Seductress •(9669) (P. Hancock)
- Precious Red •(9724) (H. Pittman)
- Rob's Boolaroo •(8053) (R. Robinson)

■ 2019

- Jersey Snow Flakes •(9820) (R. Kurzynski)
- Buckeye Nostalgia •(10484) (P. Hancock)
- Jolly Orchid •(9719) (H. Pittman)
- Kentucky Gooseberries •(D. Rollins)

■ 2020

- The Alps •(7813) (K. Horikoshi/H. Sawara)
- Edge of Darkness •(10677) (Paul Sorano/
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses)

■ 2021

- Carolina Elegant Affair •(10913) (L. Abplanalp)
- Rob's Vanilla Trail •(9296) (R. Robinson)



Photo credit: Winston J. Goretsky

Carolina Elegant Affair

Hybridized by: L. Abplanalp

Standard

Exhibited by: Linda Abplanalp (Raleigh, NC, 2010)



Shows and Judges

By Mary Corondan, Shows and Judges Chair

Email: judges@avsa.org

People have raised some questions about using driftwood in container gardens. Driftwood, twigs or small branches may be used as an accessory in a container garden if they are representative of a fallen tree. These items should not have the appearance of being planted or used as line material. After all, none of these would have roots. A judge should eliminate any container garden where these items are used in a manner that has the appearance of the dead wood being planted or used as line material.

In some shows, the Design Reservations Chair or other small "walk-through" group might review the show exhibits prior to judging and contact any exhibitors whose plants or designs do not conform to the show schedule or AVSA rules. If time allows, this will give the exhibitor an opportunity to adjust them, if they so choose, prior to judging. While this position is not one of those required on the masthead of the Show Committees, it is very helpful to exhibitors. Once judging has begun, an exhibitor

should not reenter the showroom to manipulate an exhibit to bring it into conformance. Other than the judges and clerks, the committee chairs who must be on the showroom floor for consultation during judging are the Show, Classification, Judges and Awards. It is also advisable to have entries and placement personnel readily available.

The revised "Handbook for Growers, Exhibitors, and Judges" is on schedule to be available in a hard copy form at the AVSA Convention in Little Rock in May. At that time, a downloadable edition may also be purchased online on the African Violet Society of America website at www.africanvioletsocietyofamerica.org. The Shows and Judges Committee will be presenting a workshop at the convention to review the new Handbook.

Stay tuned! An African violet show may be coming soon to a venue near you!

"Perfectly Pittman" Video

This video chronicles the multiple hybrids, growing techniques, growing spaces and AVSA involvement of Hortense and Ray Pittman.



Jolly Orchid

Available in the
AVSA Store.
DVD and Thumbdrive
format \$20



In Search of New Violets

By Dr. Jeff Smith

Email: jsmith4@bsu.edu

A question on one of the African violet Facebook groups asked if all current African violets were descendants of the “Original Ten.” For those who are not familiar with this bit of African violet history, the Original Ten refers to a group of 10 hybrids created and released in 1936 by the firm Armacost & Royston. This plant-growing company in California grew out African violet seeds obtained from England and Germany. Seedlings were crossed together and more than 1,000 plants were evaluated for desirable qualities. Of these, 10 plants were named and released as some of the first commercial African violets. Many, such as Blue Boy, are still grown today and the Original Ten did serve as parents for many breeding programs of the time.

Today’s hybrids may trace back through many generations to some of these plants. However, other African violets were developed from new collections of species plants and are unlikely to have an Original Ten plant as a direct ancestor. An example would be the trailing African violets. The Original Ten were not trailers. The trailing habit was developed using several of the wild species plants that have the trailing growth form. Since many of the species plants were collected after 1936, it is highly unlikely that they are part of the genetic background from the Original Ten.

Our current African violets represent the genetic input of several species plants, many new mutations and sports, and extensive hybridization programs. The result is the rich diversity of growth forms, sizes, bloom colors and other characteristics that make today’s African violets so enjoyable. New mutations and combinations are being released every year. The Original Ten are part of today’s plants, but it is doubtful that many are direct descendants of these 1936 plants.

It is possible for a chimera to switch the pattern of the stripes. I would suspect this is very unusual and very rare, but it can happen.

Q: Is it possible for a chimera to sport that the stripes change places? For example, a plant with a white center stripe changing into a plant that has a colored center stripe and white side stripes?

A: Chimeras are the result of a plant that has two different genetic layers. The epidermal or outer skin cells produce the outer stripes in the flower. The mesophyll or center cells produce the center stripe in the flowers. When the genetics in flower color are different between the epidermal and mesophyll cells, the result is a chimera or striped flower.

The pattern of the stripes is only maintained when the two types of cells remain in the same arrangement of layers. Since only the epidermal cells are used to produce a baby plant, chimeras will not reproduce true from leaves. The babies will usually have the flower color of the outer stripe plant in the chimera flower. Only when buds that have both the epidermal and mesophyll cell layers are used will a chimera cutting reproduce true to type. This is why plants produced from suckers or other buds will usually remain true to type in a chimera.

The location of the cells can become mixed up during certain conditions, usually stress, and the epidermal and mesophyll cells can switch locations. When this occurs, the result is often a plant that is half chimera and half solid. You can also get a bloom stalk that has a mixture of chimera blooms and solid blooms. Sometimes, the mixing of cell layers is more complicated and different patterns of mixed colors are produced. However, in a few very rare cases, the location between epidermal and mesophyll cells is 100% exchanged. A plant grown from this exchange would have the flower stripes in a reverse pattern compared to the original chimera. You might say that this is a chimera of a chimera.

So, final answer: Yes, it is possible for a chimera to switch the pattern of the stripes. I would suspect this is very unusual and very rare, but it can happen.

Q: I have a seedling that seems to have spooned foliage. Is this an inherited genetic trait?

A: Spooned foliage is an uncommon trait but has been reported to be a genetic recessive. If this is the only seedling in the cross with the trait, I would suspect the possibility of a new mutation resulting in spooned foliage. If several seedlings are showing the trait, then it is possible that both parents are carrying the recessive for the trait and standard inheritance of a genetic recessive is occurring in the offspring. However, if you have only grown out 10 or so seedlings, it may be difficult to tell from the small sample size if you have a new mutation or a chance combination of a recessive trait.

If the seedling with spooned foliage has other desirable features, I hope you will grow the plant out for three generations and see if the trait is stable. There are very few cultivars with true spooned foliage and another plant with this trait would be welcomed.

Q: Can the African violet species sport to have variegated foliage?

A: Yes, the most common sporting in the species to variegated foliage is spontaneous variegation, where a section or part of one or a few leaves are non-green. Spontaneous variegation is very difficult to select for through leaf cuttings, and usually this mutation dies out over time. This type of sport has occurred in several of the species and their clones.

I have seen a good example of a sport to crown variegation in *S. rupicolus*. This appears to parallel the origin of the crown variegation trait in other African violets in the 1950s. I have also seen a good example of mosaic variegation in a sport of *S. ionanthus* subspecies *diplotrichus* cl. Parker. This last sport also changed the flower color from blue to pink, so the mutation affected both foliage and flower. To date, I don't recall seeing an example of the Tommie Lou variegation in a sport of the species. If someone knows of a sport in the species of the Tommie Lou variegation, please let me know.

Q: If a hybridizer wanted to increase the possibility of sports, should they work with seeds or with leaf cuttings?

A: I presume you are trying to increase the possibility of sports through some agent like X-rays or a mutagenic chemical. Many individuals in the past have worked with both seeds and leaf cuttings to try to produce new mutations. The advantage of using seeds is that they are small and exposing them to a potential mutagen is relatively easy. The disadvantage is that you are never 100% sure if a "different" seedling is the result of a mutation or the chance combination of recessive genetic traits. However, if you are after a sport, that distinction may not be important. You do need a good source of seeds and that could be a problem when trying to induce mutations in seedlings.

Since the new plantlets on leaf cuttings originate from a single epidermal cell, exposing leaves to a mutagen is relatively easy (just dip the leaf petiole into a solution containing the mutagen) and mutations may be easily spotted as plantlets develop. This might be a more practical way to produce and find a sport. Any changes from the original plant would have to be the result of a sport, unlike the production of a "different" plant using seeds. You also have a better chance of "improving" the original plant with a sport by changing the flower color, leaf type, etc. through a more controlled mutation event.

For most growers, I would think that using leaf cuttings to produce new mutations would be the way to go. We already know that African violets sport easily on their own through leaf cuttings. Trying to accelerate the rate of mutations should be achievable using the same process.

Become a Member of the AVSA Legacy Society

By Anne Nicholas Denton, Texas

Whether we want to believe it or not, someday we will all pass from this life. We will be leaving behind a legacy. A legacy can be anything: a way to honor or remember someone, monetary awards, family heirlooms handed down from the past or anything else that leaves behind a meaningful trace of your time on this earth. A legacy can also be an opportunity for others to enjoy the activities and life of one whom they never knew. People want to leave a legacy because they want to feel their life mattered.

My very beloved husband, Richard Nicholas, died in November 2019. Richard was a friend, mentor, father and compromiser as well as an African violet grower, exhibitor and hybridizer. Richard absolutely loved every minute of his life, but he especially loved his association with the African violet world. He thrived and was part of a whole family that he never knew existed before entering the African violet world.

Those wonderful experiences in the African violet world compelled him to ensure that these awesome opportunities would be available to others. Therefore, almost 20 years ago, he helped create our AVSA Legacy Society to benefit the Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund, which is an endowment fund for AVSA's future.

If you would like to be part of the AVSA Legacy Society, it is very simple. All you have to do is pledge to donate \$1,000 or more to the Tinari Fund now or after you pass away. If your gift will come at a later date, your pledge should be written into your will, estate plan or life insurance policy so those directing your financial affairs after your death know to send the money to AVSA for the benefit of the Tinari Fund.

Richard and I, of course, were/are members of the AVSA Legacy Society. After Richard's very unexpected death, I made a donation to the AVSA Legacy Society. I sent more than the \$1,000 that was required. It seemed like a wonderful way to acknowledge the many years Richard and I made friends and traveled near and far to shows, workshops and conventions, all of which brought us the joy of lifetime friends. Those friends are folks we never would have met if it were not for the love of African violets.

When we are gone, much about us will be forgotten. We will no longer need our earthly possessions or relationships. But, because we joined the AVSA Legacy Society, others in the future will have the chance to travel to shows and conventions and have the joy of making new friends. That is the legacy we will leave behind.

So, just do it! Join the AVSA Legacy Society and help guarantee AVSA's future.

For more information about the AVSA Legacy Society and AVSA's other endowment funds, visit www.africanvioletsofamerica.org/support or contact the office at avsa@earthlink.net or (409) 839-4725.

AVSA is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations may be tax deductible (please consult your tax advisor). Please consider AVSA as you make your year-end giving decisions.

Booster Donations

By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from July 1, 2021, through August 30, 2021 Total: \$945

Email: fundraising@avsa.org

Booster Donations support AVSA ongoing general expenses.

■ \$300-\$399

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By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Donations received from July 1, 2021, through August 30, 2021 Total: \$161

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The Barbara Burde Endowment Fund supports the Society's long-term needs in technology.

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By Janet Riemer Pennington, New Jersey

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The Anne and Frank Tinari Endowment Fund supports the long-term stability of the Society.

■ \$200-\$300

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Richard Nicholas*

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By Randy G. Deutsch Sioux Falls, South Dakota

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Email: fundraising@avsa.org

The Boyce Edens Research Fund supports research and scholarships.

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Shown by/photo credit: Lola Sutherland

Frozen in Time

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses/Sorano
Standard



Shown by/photo credit: Mary Corondan

Ma's King Carnival

Cyber Diamond Convention

Hybridized by: O. Robinson
Standard

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Vendor Profile: Petals and Leaves Cutting Gardens and Nursery

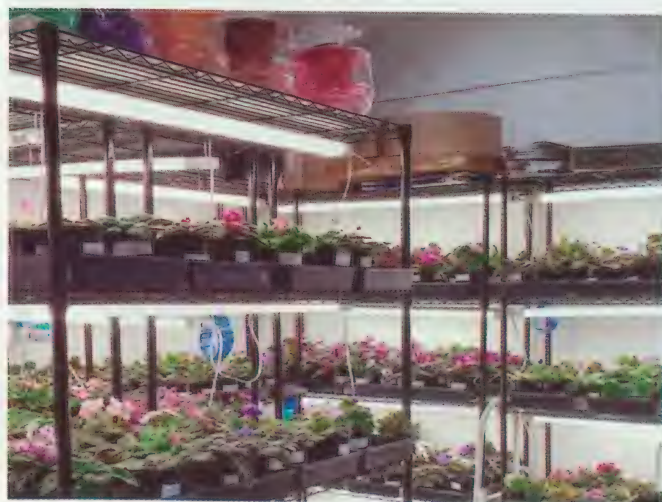
By Sophia Bennett

Email: editor@avsa.org

Petals and Leaves Cutting Gardens and Nursery in Ellensburg, Washington, is a relatively new Commercial Member of AVSA but one that is well worth knowing. Owner Diane Bowman operates her business out of a small nursery on her property. The shop is a clean, well-kept area with a floor made of modular tiles and walls covered in 4-foot by 8-foot plastic sheeting.



Visitors will find light stands full of miniatures, semi-miniatures and standards and trays of leaves. Petals and Leaves has over 300 varieties, including vintage, Optimara, Russian, Hunter's and Wesley's African violets.



Bowman recently remodeled her violet nursery and made some notable changes that are helping the plants look even more beautiful. She grows under LED lighting, but she's switched from 5500K lights to 4000K ones. The plants seem to like that much better. It's also much easier to control humidity and temperature in the new space.

One of the things that's made the biggest difference in the health of her plants is that she's now monitoring and controlling the pH of her water. The water in Ellensburg is quite alkaline, so she's using pH Down to bring the levels closer to neutral. Be careful with the product; at first, Bowman overcorrected the pH and the plants started to look very pale and unhealthy. To make sure she gets the levels correct, she now tests the water with a pH meter. These meters come in a range of prices, but for people who don't want to buy one, try pH dip strips.



Bowman often recommends Rob's Vanilla Trail to people who are new to African violets because it produces an abundance of flowers. Photo by Winston J. Goretsky.

Bowman now has a full-time job as a clinical research coordinator at the Seattle Children's Research Institute in Yakima, Washington. She started Petals and Leaves in 2019 when she wasn't working 40 hours a week and was looking for other things to do. The first thing she did was start a cutting garden in back of her house where people could u-pick flowers to make their own bouquets.

One day, she read an article about growing African violets commercially and thought, "Oh, I can do that because I did it when I was younger." Bowman's great aunt was a serious African violet enthusiast who grew them at her home in Pennsylvania and sold them to local shops and collectors. She is the one who taught Bowman to propagate African violets and inspired her to begin selling violets.

Bowman says the best thing about her work is taking her violets to farmers markets and holiday bazaars and seeing how excited people get about them. They'll often tell her that African violets remind them of their grandmother and it makes their day to see them. Those comments make Bowman's day too.

Petals and Leaves is open to the public by appointment only. Plants are available for purchase online at www.petalsleaves.com. In addition to plants and leaves, Bowman offers a range of violet-related merchandise, including pots, tote bags and cell phone cases.



And the Winners Are ...

By Mary Corondan Fairview, Texas

Email: judges@avsa.org

■ Wisconsin Council of AV Clubs — Winners:

• Best AVSA Standard Collection: Ma's Hickie, Pink Satin Pillow, The Alps; Best AVSA Species Collection: S. 5b clone *grotei* Silvert, S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus*, S. 5c2 clone *diplotrichus* Punter #6; Best in Show/Best Species: S. 5c1 clone *ionanthus*; Best Miniature: Cajun's Lil Forever Blue; Best Trailer: Tiny Wood Trail; Best Gesneriad: *Sinningia* 'Orange Sherbet', **Kevin Degner**.

• 2nd Best AVSA Standard Collection: Rebel's Rose Bud, Funambule, Apache Primrose; Best Mini/Semi Collection: Eternal Orbit, Cajun's Lil Joy, Jolly Maiden; Best Standard: Funambule; Best Semiminiature: Eternal Orbit; Horticulture Sweepstakes, **Arlene Garvens**.
• 2nd Best AVSA Mini/Semi Collection: Jolly Dear, Slow Dancin', Rebel's Meg; Best Design, **Betsy Fox**.
• Design Sweepstakes (tie): **Kevin Degner and Doug Kindschuh**.

Arkansas: Natural Beauty — and Talent!

By Danny Tidwell Little Rock, Arkansas

Arkansas, “The Natural State,” is well known for its abundant natural beauty, but we also have an abundance of talent among native Arkansans. They include athletes, authors, musicians, singers, songwriters and so many more. You will recognize some in the list below right away, and many probably surprise you.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe

Born March 20, 1915, in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, Sister Rosetta Tharpe was an American singer, songwriter, guitarist and recording artist. She attained popularity in the 1930s and 1940s with her gospel recordings, which had a unique mixture of spiritual lyrics and rhythmic accompaniment. She was the first great recording star of gospel music who appealed to rhythm and blues and rock and roll audiences and influenced early rock and roll musicians Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2018.

Johnny Cash

John R. “Johnny” Cash was an American singer-songwriter, guitarist, actor and author. He is one of the best-selling musicians of all time, selling more than 90 million records worldwide. Although remembered mostly as a country music icon, his sound embraced rock and roll, rockabilly, blues, folk and gospel. This crossover appeal won Cash the rare honor of being inducted into the Country Music, Rock and Roll, and Gospel Music halls of fame. He was born in Kingsland, Arkansas, on February 26, 1932.

Glen Campbell

Glen Travis Campbell was born in Billstown, Arkansas, on April 22, 1936. He was an American singer, guitarist, songwriter, television host and actor. He was best known for several hit songs in the 1960s and 1970s,

and for hosting a music and comedy variety show on CBS from 1969 until 1972. He released more than 70 albums in a career that spanned five decades, selling more than 45 million records worldwide, including 12 gold albums, four platinum albums and one double-platinum album.

Dizzy Dean

Jay Hanna “Dizzy” Dean, also known as Jerome Herman Dean, was an American professional baseball pitcher. During his Major League Baseball career, he played for the St. Louis Cardinals, Chicago Cubs and St. Louis Browns. Dean had a brash and colorful personality, and is the last National League pitcher to win 30 games in one season. After his playing career, “Ol’ Diz” became a popular television sports commentator. Dean was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1953. Dean was born January 16, 1910, in Lucas, Arkansas.

Bear Bryant

Paul William “Bear” Bryant was an American college football player and coach. He was best known as the head coach of the University of Alabama football team. During his 25-year tenure as Alabama’s head coach, he amassed six national championships and 13 conference championships. Upon his retirement in 1982, he held the record for the most wins as a head coach in collegiate football history. Bryant was born September 11, 1913, in Kingsland, Arkansas.

This is just a sampling of the famous people from The Natural State. Singer Charlie Rich, actor Billy Bob Thornton, author John Grisham and actress Mary Steenburgen also hail from Arkansas.

We also have some talented African violet growers and designers who are looking forward to displaying those talents as “Violets Go Hog Wild in Arkansas” May 29 to June 5, 2022.



2022 AVSA Convention Awards

By Vickie Crider Humble, Texas

Email: showawards@avsa.org

Let's celebrate our 76th anniversary in style! We are going to have lots to celebrate because we are planning to bring all the awards we have collected since our 2019 convention in Houston, Texas, to the Little Rock, Arkansas show. I want to thank all the individuals, clubs, councils and commercial members who have already given so generously. Your gifts make the show so special and give the winners that extra incentive to participate every year.

If your name, club or council is not on this list, there is still plenty of time to donate to the 2021 awards fund. Please send your check or money order to:

AVSA Office, Awards

P.O. Box 22417
Beaumont, TX 77720

Donations can also be made online at www.african-violet-society-of-america.org. Click on the Participate tab and choose Next Convention.

You can give a specific donation in remembrance of a special person. It can be assigned to a specific variety they loved to grow or given as an undesignated award. Undesignated awards are helpful because the funds are sure to be used for categories such as Best in Class, AVSA collection awards or one of over 100 other amateur, commercial horticultural or design classes.

Although every attempt has been made to list the awards correctly, mistakes happen. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you see an error. We reserve the right to modify or change these listings. Check the AVSA website for updates to this listing next year.

Let's make this a great convention with awards!

■ Specified Awards —

Amateur Division Collection

- \$300 Best Holtkamp Collection
Holtkamp Greenhouses
Reinhold Holtkamp (TN)
- \$200 2nd Best Holtkamp Collection
Holtkamp Greenhouses
Reinhold Holtkamp (TN)
- \$100 3rd Best Holtkamp Collection
Holtkamp Greenhouses
Reinhold Holtkamp (TN)
- \$200 Best Robinson Collection
The Violet Barn
Dr. Ralph & Olive Robinson (NY)
- \$100 Second Best Robinson Collection
The Violet Barn
Dr. Ralph & Olive Robinson (NY)
- \$300 Best Buckeye Collection
Pat Hancock (OH)
- \$200 2nd Best Buckeye Collection
Pat Hancock (OH)
- \$100 3rd Best Buckeye Collection
Pat Hancock (OH)
- \$300 Best Russian Collection
Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Russia)
- \$200 2nd Best Russian Collection
Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Russia)
- \$100 3rd Best Russian Collection
Tatiana and Vladimir Kalgin (Russia)
- \$200 Best Lyon's Collection
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
Paul Sorano (NY)
- \$100 2nd Best Lyon's Collection
Lyndon Lyon Greenhouses
Paul Sorano (NY)
- \$200 Best Hunter's Hybrid
Collection Standard
Ken Muzalewski (TX)
- \$75 2nd Best Hunter's Hybrid
Collection Standard
Ken Muzalewski (TX)

- \$200 Best Hunter's Hybrid
Collection Mini/Semiminiature
Ken Muzalewski (TX)
- \$75 2nd Best Hunter's Hybrid
Collection Mini/Semiminiature
Ken Muzalewski (TX)
- \$250 Best Cajun's Collection
Dr. Minh Bui (MD)

■ Specific Variety Awards —

Amateur Horticulture

- \$50 Bill Foster Memorial
Deborah Patterson (TX)
- \$25 Best Aca's Libbie
Bluebird Greenhouse
Tom and Libbie Glembocki (NC)
- \$50 Best Buckeye Cranberry Sparkler
Cincinnati AVS (OH)
- \$50 Best Buckeye Seductress
Pat Hancock (OH)
- \$25 Best Cabbage Patch
Terri Post (IA)
- \$25 Best Cajun's Code Blue
Karen Buchanan (TN)
- \$100 Best Concord
Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
- \$50 Best Del's Spring Blush
In memory of Del Setchel
Violet Reflections Group
Jana Strathmann (IN)
- \$25 Best Everdina
Mary Corondan (TX)
- \$25 Best Hunter's Exit Wound
Karen Buchanan (TN)
- \$25 Best Hunter's Kashmir
Karen Buchanan (TN)
- \$25 Best Janet (Maas)
Janet Riemer (NJ)
- \$25 Best Jersey Snowflakes
AVC of Morris County
Bob Dyke (NJ)
- \$50 Best Jitterbug Breathless
Cincinnati AVS (OH)
- \$25 Best LE Karusel
Starz N Streps
Steve and Donna Turner (SC)
- \$50 Best Lela Marie
Early Bird Violet Club
Brenda Posey (AL)
- \$25 Best Lonestar Helen Mahr
Anne Nicholas (TX)
In Memory of Richard Nicholas

- \$25 Best Lonestar Lady
Anne Nicholas (TX)
In Memory of Richard Nicholas
- \$25 Best Lonestar Snowstorm
Marge Savage (TX)
- \$25 Best Lonestar Twilight
Anne Nicholas (TX)
In Memory of Richard Nicholas
- \$25 Best Lyon's Rockin Romance
Cathleen Graves (WA)
- \$20 Best Marching Band
Karyn Cichocki (NJ)
In Memory of Kent Stork
- \$35 Best Ozark Sinningia
Dave's Violets
David Harris (MO)
- \$20 Best Rodeo Country
Spring Branch AV Club
Teresa Kaminski (TX)
- \$25 Best Sailor Boy
In Honor of Judy Carter
Mike & Debbie McInnis (IN)
- \$100 Best The Alps
Kazuo Horikoshi (Japan)
- \$25 Best Tina (Maas)
Janet Riemer (NJ)
- \$25 Best Wrangler's Spanish Cavalier
Bluebird Greenhouse
Tom & Libbie Glembocki (NC)
- \$25 BIC Yellow Blossom/any foliage
Janet Fox (CA)
- \$25 Best in Class 48
Copper State African Violet Club
Susan Anderson (AZ)
- \$25 Best other gesneriad fibrous rooted in bloom
other than Streptocarpus/Streptocarpella
Nancy Carr (OH)
In Memory of Richard Carr
- \$25 Best Semiminiature
Cathleen Graves (WA)

■ Specific Design Awards —

Amateur Division

- \$35 Best Natural Garden
Janet Fox (CA)
- \$35 Best Dish Garden
Janet Fox (CA)
- \$35 Best Terrarium
Janet Fox (CA)
- \$50 Best Underwater Design
In Memory of Rosemary White
North Coast Gesneriad and
African Violet Club (OH)

■ **Undesignated — Amateur Horticulture**

- \$25 Alice Brown (AR)
- \$50 Cedar Valley Club (IA)
- \$25 Central Arkansas AVS (AR)
- \$25 Magic Knight AVS (TX)
- \$100 Mary Corondan (TX)
- \$100 Anne Nicholas (TX)
In Memory of Richard Nicholas
- \$100 Anne Nicholas (TX)
In Memory of Richard Nicholas
- \$25 Richmond AVS (VA)

■ **Undesignated — Design Division**

- \$50 Kathy Lahti (MN)

■ **Undesignated — Amateur**

- \$50 1st Austin AVS (TX)
- \$25 African Violet Council of
Southern California (CA)
- \$50 African Violet Society of Minnesota (MN)
- \$25 Albuquerque AVS (NM)
- \$50 AVS of Greater Tulsa (OK)
- \$25 AVS of Tulsa (OK)
- \$25 Barb Lafashia (DE)
- \$53 Brent T. Johnson (OH)
- \$15 Bonnie Harris (MN)
- \$25 Carol Burris (AZ)
- \$10 Chelsea Tidwell (AR)
- \$25 Danny Tidwell (AR)
- \$35 Dave's Violets – David Harris (MO)
- \$25 Delaware African Violet &
Gesneriad Society (DE)

- \$50 Dolores Gibbs (TX)
- \$100 Dr. William E. H. Price (BC)
- \$10 Elvie Blakely (FL)
- \$50 Heart of Jacksonville AVS (FL)
- \$25 Janice Davidson (TX)
- \$15 Jeffery Smith (IN)
- \$25 Jo Anne Schrimsher (TX)
- \$25 Joan Wood (CA)
- \$19 Judith M. Carter (OK)
- \$50 Judith M. Carter (OK)
- \$25 Laura Perdomo, The Peacock Cottage (FL)
- \$25 Leonard Re (CA)
- \$50 Lincoln AVS (NB)
- \$50 Linda and Albert Hall (MO)
- \$20 Linda Scott (NM)
- \$20 Lola Sutherland (CA)
- \$275 Lone Star AV Council (TX)
- \$50 Marge and Bill Farrand (MI)
- \$25 Memphis AVS (TN)
- \$25 Missouri Valley AV Council (SD)
- \$25 North Star AV Council (MN)
- \$100 Ohio State AVS (OH)
In Memory of Bill Foster
- \$25 San Diego County AVS (CA)
- \$50 Zelda Gartner (FL)
In Memory Sharon Gartner
- \$100 TAVS (AZ)
- \$50 The Tidewater AVS (VA)
- \$25 Tri-Counties AVS (CA)
- \$25 Tustana AVS (CA)



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Remembering Bob Green

By Mary Lou Harden

Email: mlhard@verizon.net

Bob Green passed away July 25, 2021, at the age of 85 following a brief illness. Green attended Rollins College in Orlando, where he studied Spanish and later taught Spanish. He then enrolled in the University of Tennessee's Law School and later studied for the ministry at Union College in Kentucky.



When the Vietnam War broke out, he enlisted in the Air Force. He served for 26 years and retired as a Staff Sergeant. During his military years, he was stationed in many different countries, as well as several bases in the U.S. He worked for the CIA for 23 years and spent the last 13 years of his career as Launch Control Officer at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

For a period of time following his retirement, Green was a test grower of roses for the American Rose Society. He was also a very active member of AVSA for more than 50 years. He served on the Bylaws Committee. When AVSA conventions came to Florida, he served as Convention Chair and Show Chair. He was a Master Judge and Teacher. He was perhaps best known for his very creative and distinctive floral designs. He taught workshops on the elements and principles of design for many African

violet clubs and wrote articles on the subject for *African Violet Magazine*.

Many people fondly remember Green from AVSA's 50th anniversary convention in Atlanta. Everyone was challenged to wear costumes representing Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara from "Gone with the Wind." Green wore a white suit and a black mustache, and his wife Jackie wore a wide-brimmed white hat and white gown. They were the talk of the town!

Green was also active in Dixie AVS, serving as its President and holding other offices. He was a charter member of the African Violet Council of Florida, held multiple offices including President and published its quarterly newsletter. He, along with Alyce Droege, Barbara Robinson and Jim Boyer, was instrumental in starting a violet club in Orlando, the AVA Gardeners.

Green is survived by his wife Jackie, who resides in Rockledge, Florida.

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Jolly Gem

Cyber Diamond Convention

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Miniature



Photo credit: Tatiana Pugacheva

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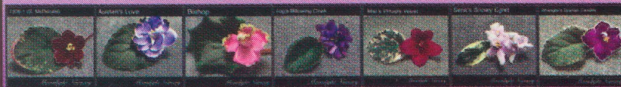
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